



PLANNING for RENOVATIONS and DEMOLITIONS

ASBESTOS AND WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a mineral fiber. There are several types of asbestos fibers. Asbestos was added to a variety of products to strengthen them and to provide heat insulation and fire resistance.

HOW CAN ASBESTOS AFFECT THE HEALTH?

Breathing asbestos fibers can lead to an increased risk of:

- Asbestosis – a fibrotic scarring of the lungs.
- Lung Cancer
- Mesothelioma - a cancer of the lining of the chest and the abdominal cavity.

The risk of lung cancer and Mesothelioma increases with the number of fibers inhaled. The risk of lung cancer from inhaling asbestos fibers is also greater if you smoke. People who get asbestosis have usually been exposed to high levels of asbestos for a long time. The symptoms of these diseases do not usually appear until about 20 to 30 years after the first exposure to asbestos.

Most people exposed to small amounts of asbestos, as we all are in our daily lives, do not develop these health problems. However, if disturbed, asbestos material may release asbestos fibers, which can be inhaled into the lungs. The fibers can remain there for a long time, increasing the risk of disease. Asbestos material that would crumble easily if handled, or that has been sawed, scraped, or sanded into a powder, is more likely to create a health hazard.

WHERE CAN ASBESTOS BE FOUND AND WHEN CAN IT BE A PROBLEM?

Until the 1970s, many types of building products and insulation materials used in buildings and homes contained asbestos. Common products that might have contained asbestos in the past include:

- **STEAM PIPES, BOILERS, and FURNACE DUCTS** insulated with an asbestos pipe wrap, blanket, or asbestos paper tape.
- **RESILIENT FLOOR TILES** (vinyl asbestos, asphalt, and rubber), the backing on **VINYL SHEET FLOORING**, and **ADHESIVES** used for installing floor tile.
- **CEMENT SHEET, MILLBOARD, and PAPER** used as insulation around furnaces and wood burning stoves.
- **DOOR GASKETS** in boilers, furnaces, and wood stoves.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

108 Cherry Street
PO Box 70
Burlington, VT
05402-0070
healthvermont.gov

- **SOUNDPROOFING** or **DECORATIVE MATERIAL** sprayed on walls and ceilings.
- **PATCHING AND JOINT COMPOUNDS** for walls and ceilings, and **TEXTURED PAINTS**.
- **ASBESTOS CEMENT ROOFING, SHINGLES, and SIDING**.

ASBESTOS CAN BE PRESENT IN NEW CONSTRUCTION!

It is important to note that asbestos has not been fully banned in the United States. Several modern building materials can still legally contain asbestos, including (but not limited to):

- Vinyl floor tiles and associated adhesives.
- Cement shingles, sheets, and pipes.
- Pipeline wrap.
- Roofing felt and coatings.
- Gaskets.
- Non-roofing coatings.

PLANNING FOR A BUILDING RENOVATION OR DEMOLITION



THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) AND THE VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAVE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS WHERE RENOVATION OR DEMOLITION ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE.

- ❖ **Prior to the renovation or demolition there must be an inspection for suspect asbestos-containing materials (ACM).**
- ❖ **This applies only in those areas which will be disturbed by either the renovation or demolition.**
- ❖ **This inspection must be conducted by a Vermont certified asbestos inspector.**

UNDER THE LAW, BOTH THE BUILDING OWNER AND CONTRACTOR ARE RESPONSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT THE INSPECTION HAS BEEN CONDUCTED PRIOR TO THE RENOVATION OR DEMOLITION.



WHAT HAPPENS IF THE INSPECTOR FINDS ACM IN THE BUILDING?

- ❖ **The ACM must be removed by a Vermont certified abatement contractor prior to the renovation or demolition.**
- ❖ **The abatement contractor will have to notify the Department and the EPA prior to the abatement and obtain a project permit from the Department.**

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE INSPECTOR DOES NOT FIND ACM IN THE BUILDING?

RENOVATION - *You proceed with your project.*

DEMOLITION - *You must notify EPA and the Department 10 working days prior to the demolition starting.*



The Asbestos Program provides certification lists of Inspectors, Contractors, and Laboratories. We also have guidance on sampling and work standards. We can also provide you with technical assistance and additional information about State and Federal requirements.