

safety matters

Construction
Toolbox Talks

From your safety partners at **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd**

Staying Safe Around Asbestos

Even though most uses of asbestos have been banned, it can still be found in a variety of products, such as building materials. The new Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 came out on 6 April 2012 and creates procedures and requirements that apply to all work involving asbestos materials. While most of the requirements remain unchanged from the 2006 version, there are a few additional requirements for non-licensed work with asbestos, including notification, medical surveillance and record keeping. Employees need to follow all asbestos regulations because they can be exposed to this hazardous material in residential and commercial buildings, and during renovations and demolitions of properties.

The inhalation of asbestos fibres can cause serious damage to the lungs and other organs that may not appear until years after exposure. Asbestos fibres associated with these health risks are too small to be seen with the naked eye, and smokers are at a higher risk for developing asbestos-related diseases if exposed.

Avoid Asbestos Inhalation

The following tips are basic safety reminders for those who work near or with asbestos-containing materials:

- If you suspect that asbestos is present in area that is not designated as an asbestos workspace, leave the area immediately and tell your supervisor.
- Never enter a controlled zone that the company has designated as a regulated area where asbestos work is being performed.
- If you are not wearing the appropriate respiratory protection, do not enter an asbestos-regulated area.

- Do not eat, smoke, drink, chew gum or apply cosmetics in an asbestos-regulated area.
- Read and obey all warning signs displayed in asbestos-regulated areas.
- When working with asbestos, keep the material wet and vacuum the dust using a HEPA vacuum. Immediately collect and close all waste in bags designed to hold asbestos.

Protect Yourself!

- Always wear the required protective clothing such as coveralls or similar full-body clothing, head coverings, gloves and foot coverings when working with asbestos. Face shields, goggles and other protective equipment are also necessary.
- Make sure that you receive the proper training and medical clearance if your work requires the use of a respirator for asbestos protection. Use the correct type of respirator for the level of exposure. Talk to your supervisor regarding whether you have sufficient protection.
- Follow all required hygiene and decontamination practices after working with asbestos.
- Leave your work clothes and shoes at the workplace and wash them at work if they are not disposable. Family members of workers exposed to asbestos can become ill from asbestos taken home on an employee's clothing or shoes. If required, shower at work after working with asbestos.

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