

responsibilities of managing asbestos in buildings

October 2004

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1 Introduction

This paper sets out the requirements of the 2002 Asbestos Regulations and the need to carry out a survey of the church property by **May 2004**.

2 Asbestos is dangerous!

Although asbestos was banned in 1985 and it is now illegal to use asbestos in the construction or refurbishment of any premises, many thousands of tonnes of it were used in the past (up to 1999) and much of it is still in place. As long as it is in good condition and is not being or going to be disturbed or damaged there is no risk. But if it is disturbed or damaged, it can become a danger to health, because asbestos fibres are released into the air and people can breathe them in, leading to asbestos-related diseases, mainly cancers of the lungs and chest lining.

You are most likely to come across asbestos in these materials:

Higher Risk	Lower Risk
Sprayed asbestos and asbestos loose packing - generally used as fire breaks in ceiling voids	Some ceiling tiles
Moulded or preformed lagging - generally used in thermal insulation of pipes and boilers	Certain textured coatings
Sprayed asbestos - generally used as fire protection in ducts, firebreaks, panels, partitions, soffit boards, ceiling panels and around structural steel work	Asbestos cement products, including corrugated sheets in roofing and wall cladding & gutters, rainwater pipes and water tanks
Insulating boards used for fire protection, thermal insulation, partitioning and ducts	Bitumen roofing material
Millboard, paper and paper products used for insulation of electrical equipment. Asbestos paper has also been used as a fire-proof facing on wood fibreboard	Vinyl or thermoplastic floor tiles

3 The New Regulations

The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 puts **a duty to manage asbestos** if you have maintenance and repair responsibilities for non-domestic premises. The duty requires you to manage the risk from asbestos and we suggest you follow the procedure set out overleaf.

4 Find out if asbestos is present

- Look at building plans and any other relevant information, such as builders' invoices for major building or refurbishment work;
- Carry out a thorough inspection of the premises both inside and out to identify materials that are or may be asbestos; and
- Consult others, such as the architects, employees or safety representatives, who may be able to provide you with more information and who have a duty of co-operation to make this available.

5 Presume the material is asbestos

You should always presume any material contains asbestos unless there is strong evidence to suggest it does not.

6 Survey and sample for asbestos

In some cases, where you have no maintenance work planned and/or the premises are small, it may be appropriate for you to carry out your own inspection. However, you may choose to employ a suitably trained person to do a survey of the premises to identify any asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), particularly if you are planning maintenance or refurbishment of the premises. They may also be able to advise you on what you need to do and what to include in your management plan. You should ask the person or organisation:

- for evidence of their training and experience in such work;
- whether they are going to carry out the survey in accordance with the HSE guidance MDHS100 Surveying, sampling and assessment of asbestos-containing materials; and
- for evidence that they have suitable liability insurance.

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) has developed an accreditation scheme for organisations that do asbestos surveys. A number of organisations are proposing to develop accredited personnel certification schemes for individuals who undertake asbestos surveys. (See the useful addresses below.)

7 Assess the condition of any ACMs

- Is the surface of the material damaged, frayed or scratched?
- Are the surface sealants peeling or breaking off?
- Is the material becoming detached from its base? (This is a particular problem with pipe and boiler lagging and sprayed coatings)
- Are protective coverings, designed to protect the material, missing or damaged?
- Is there asbestos dust or debris from damage near the material?

8 Record where the asbestos or presumed asbestos is and its condition

You need to prepare a drawing or some other record which shows where the asbestos or presumed asbestos is, the type if known, its form, its amount and what condition it is in. The drawing should be simple, clear and always available at the premises. Any areas of the premises which you cannot look at, such as in roofs and heating ducts and behind ceiling tiles and wall partitions, should be recorded on the drawing as possibly containing ACMs unless you are sure they do not.

9 Assess the potential risk from the Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs)

In order to assess the potential risk from the ACMs you will need to consider the following factors:

- The information gathered on the location, amount and condition of the ACM;
- If the ACM is in a position where it is likely to be disturbed;
- How much ACM is present;
- Whether there is easy access to the ACM;
- Whether people work near the ACM in a way that is liable to disturb it;
- If it is close to areas in which people normally work when it is disturbed;
- The numbers of people who use the area where the ACM is; and
- If maintenance work, refurbishment or other work on the premises is likely to be carried out where the ACM is.

10 Decide what to do

10.1 Asbestos in good condition

If it is in good condition it is usually safer to leave it in place and manage it.

10.2 Asbestos in poor condition

If the asbestos is in poor condition or is likely to be damaged or disturbed you will need to decide whether it should be repaired, sealed, enclosed or removed.

10.3 Managing asbestos left in place

- Note where it is on your drawing or other records and keep this information up to date.
- Make sure that everyone who needs to know about the asbestos is effectively alerted to its presence. You can label ACMs clearly.
- It can save time and prevent confusion if you make a note of the location of non-asbestos material, which could be mistaken for asbestos.

10.4 Repair and removal

If the asbestos can be made safe by repairing it or enclosing it to prevent further damage, the area should be marked after it has been repaired and make sure it is on your list of asbestos locations.

Otherwise the asbestos should be removed. Generally removal should be done by a qualified and licensed contractor. You should ask to see their waste carrier licence. The work should only be carried out yourself if the materials are fully bound, such as asbestos cement, roof tiles, gutters and vinyl floor tiles, which do not need to be broken, sanded or drilled when removed. You should ensure you have proper protective clothing and breathing apparatus. Asbestos waste should be double-bagged in heavy-duty polythene bags and clearly labelled with the label prescribed for asbestos, before it is transported to a disposal site. The waste can only be disposed of at a site licensed to receive it. Your local authority will have information on licensed sites in the area.

11 Monitor and review the effectiveness of the plan

The asbestos should be monitored with six to twelve months between inspections.

12 What should you tell your workers/contractors/members?

The new duty requires that you make information on the location and condition of the asbestos available to anyone liable to work on it or disturb it. This would include employees, contractors (e.g. installing telephones, computers or any electrical equipment) and church members.

Make sure that they <i>do</i>:	Make sure they <i>don't</i>:
keep everyone out of the work area who does not need to be there	break up large pieces of asbestos materials
take care not to create dust	expose other workers who are not protected
keep the material wet, whenever possible	take protective clothing home to wash
wear a suitable respirator and protective clothing	use high-speed power tools - they create high levels of dust
clean up with a vacuum cleaner which complies with BS 5415 (Type 'H')	

Useful addresses:

Asbestos Removals Contractors Association

ARCA House
237 Branston Road
Burton upon Trent
Staffordshire
DE14 3BT
Tel: 01283 531126

Asbestos Control and Abatement Division

TICA House
Allington Way
Yarm Road Business Park
Darlington
DL1 4QB
Tel: 01325 466704

Asbestos Building Inspectors Certification Scheme

Suite 2 Georgian House
Great Northern Road
Derby
DE1 1LT
Tel: 01332 298087

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

12 Great George Street
Parliament Square
London SW1P 3AD
Fax: 020 7334 3844
E-mail: asbestos@rics.org.uk

United Kingdom Accreditation Service

21- 47 High Street
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HSE Information Services

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Useful leaflets can be downloaded from:
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/asbindex.htm