Asbestos

SafetyNet #: 84

The term asbestos refers to a family of naturally occurring minerals. These minerals are mined in locations throughout the world including Australia, Canada, South Africa, and Asia. California was formerly a major producer of chrysotile asbestos, and the state rock, Serpentine, often contains asbestos.

Asbestos fibers are small, thin, strong, and resistant to heat and chemicals. These characteristics make asbestos ideal for use in many building materials, including thermal system insulation, floor tiles, roofing materials and surfacing compounds. California regulations define “asbestos-containing construction materials” (ACM) as any manufactured construction material, including structural, mechanical and building material, that contain more than one percent of asbestos by weight. These materials are again classified as either "friable" (crumbly) or "non-friable" (non-crumbly).

The mere presence of undisturbed and non-friable ACM in a building does not present a health hazard. However, exposure to airborne asbestos fibers has been known to cause asbestosis, lung cancer, and other asbestos-related diseases. Asbestos is listed under Proposition 65 of the California Health and Safety Code Sections 25915-25924 as a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer.

The campus has an asbestos management program designed to protect the health and safety of campus employees, students, and visitors. The main and on-going program elements are as follows:

- Comprehensive surveys of the ACM in campus buildings and mechanical spaces
- Maintenance and repair of building ACM
- Periodic inspections of ACM in buildings
- Annual awareness training provided for campus maintenance staff.
- Abatement of ACM from campus buildings during major alterations and/or demolition projects
- Identification and clean up of mechanical spaces containing damaged ACM and/or visible debris
- All areas known to be asbestos contaminated are posted and critical barriers are put in place to stop the migration of fibers until permanent repairs can be made.
On at least an annual basis you are informed in writing, of asbestos-containing materials in or near your work area or building. To reduce your risk of exposure to friable asbestos, these asbestos safety tips should be followed:

- Avoid touching or disturbing suspect materials on walls, ceilings, pipes, or boilers
- Do not drill holes in asbestos-containing materials
- Do not pin or hang pictures on walls covered with asbestos materials
- Do not sand asbestos floor tiles or backing material
- Do not access areas above the ceilings.
- Do not damage asbestos material while moving furniture or other items.
- Do not allow curtains, drapes, or dividers to damage asbestos materials.
- Do not brush or sweep ceilings covered with asbestos materials

Contact

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More information

Related content

1. Annual Asbestos Notification

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