Asbestos Management Fact Sheet

Introduction to Asbestos
Asbestos is a general name for a group of naturally occurring minerals composed of small fibers. These fibers are very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. Asbestos is common in many building materials used in buildings constructed prior to 1980, and was added to many older building materials including floor tiles, ceiling tiles, insulation on pipes and ducts, acoustical and decorative coatings, and roofing materials. These types of building materials are presumed to contain asbestos if installed before 1980, unless testing has proven otherwise.

When left intact and undisturbed, these materials do not pose a health risk to building occupants. There is the potential for exposure only when the material becomes damaged or disturbed since asbestos is more likely to release fibers when it is friable. (The term friable means the material can be easily crumbled).

Asbestos in Buildings
The presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of building occupants is endangered. As long as asbestos-containing materials remain in good condition and are not disturbed or damaged, exposure is unlikely. Instead of removal, an effective in-place management program minimizes any fiber releases, particularly when the materials are not significantly damaged and are not likely to be disturbed.

On the other hand, damaged, deteriorated, or disturbed asbestos-containing materials may lead to fiber release (exposure), and unauthorized removal or disturbance of asbestos materials is not only potentially unhealthy but also illegal. EPA only requires asbestos removal in order to prevent significant public exposure to asbestos, such as during building renovation or demolition. EPA recommends in-place management whenever asbestos is discovered.

Handling Asbestos
In accordance with Michigan’s Occupational Safety and Health Act (MIOSHA) regulations, only trained, certified workers should handle or remove asbestos-containing materials. Unauthorized or uncontrolled disturbance of asbestos materials is a violation of MSU policy and can lead to civil or criminal liability under EPA or MIOSHA regulations.

The following are some types of materials that may contain asbestos:

- floor tile
- boiler insulation
- ceiling tiles
- fireproofing
- linoleum
- tank insulation
- adhesives
- acoustical finishes
- floor tile mastic
- gaskets
- fume hood liners
- plaster
- pipe insulation
- HVAC duct wrap
- lab countertops
- roofing
- pipe fittings
- fire doors
- chalkboard glue
- siding shingles
Building materials that may contain asbestos should be treated as if they do contain asbestos until laboratory testing proves that they do not. If you have any questions about whether a material contains asbestos, ask your supervisor or call the MSU Physical Plant at 353-1760.

The MSU Physical Plant has surveyed buildings constructed prior to 1981 for the presence of asbestos. If you need to perform work that might involve asbestos (lifting ceiling tiles, repairing insulated pipelines, etc.), check with the Physical Plant to find out what can be done safely. For example, before moving any ceiling tiles to perform maintenance work, it is necessary to ensure they do not contain asbestos. If they do contain asbestos, they will need to be removed by licensed asbestos abatement workers before the work may be performed.

**Housekeeping**

Housekeepers and custodians and maintenance personnel working in buildings that may contain asbestos are required to have at least two-hours asbestos awareness training, with annual refresher training. Many university buildings were constructed prior to 1981, and it is recommended that all such employees obtain the two-hour training. Housekeepers and custodians must never sand or dry-buff asbestos containing floor tiles, and only wet stripping methods may be used during stripping operations. Low abrasion pads should be used at speeds below 300 rpm. Broken and fallen ceiling tiles should be left in place until identified. Only after they have been identified as safe may they be removed. Asbestos ceiling tiles must be removed only by asbestos abatement workers. Broken or damaged asbestos floor tiles (in quantities greater than 1) should also be removed by trained asbestos abatement workers. Report any suspect damaged tiles to Physical Plant.

**Releases and Spills**

It is important to report any damaged asbestos-containing materials to the MSU Physical Plant at 353-1760. If, for example, you discover some sprayed-on asbestos insulation has been knocked off of a ceiling or wall, this would be considered a "spill." As such, it would need to be cleaned up immediately by trained asbestos abatement workers. Do not attempt to clean up spills yourself, unless you are trained in the proper clean-up procedures.

**Awareness Training**

All MSU Employees who provide maintenance, renovation, and cleaning service in University buildings are required to receive formal asbestos awareness training, with approved refresher training annually. The initial training must cover the health effects of asbestos, types and location of asbestos containing materials (ACM) in University buildings, recognition of damaged and deteriorated ACM, work practices requirements to avoid disturbance of ACM, and proper response to fiber release episodes.

Much of MSU’s asbestos training is provided at this time by outside consultants. MSU has produced a video covering required asbestos awareness training for custodial, maintenance and repair personnel. An online refresher course is currently in development. If you have questions regarding training requirements, contact the Physical Plant at 353-1760 or ORCBS at 355-6651.

**Asbestos Contact Information**

Physical Plant 353-1760
ORCBS 355-6651
SUMMARY OF ASBESTOS DO’S AND DON’T’S

DO NOT damage, disturb, or remove asbestos-containing materials. Only trained and certified workers should handle or remove asbestos-containing materials. In other words, never drill, hammer, cut, saw, break, damage, move or disturb any materials that may contain asbestos, including wallboard, ceiling tiles, floor tiles, lab bench tops or insulation.

DO promptly report potential asbestos debris or damaged asbestos materials (e.g., damaged pipe insulation and loose/missing floor tiles) that you see to your supervisor/resident advisor/house corporation. The materials may already have been tested or, if not, will be sampled and tested. When in doubt, ask.

DO contact your supervisor or the Physical Plant if you see improper cleaning or maintenance activities involving materials that may contain asbestos.