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Control and Management of Asbestos

Policy

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DOCUMENT CONTROL	
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy statement has been produced in response to the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 and the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

1.2 These regulations elaborate and reinforce the general legislation.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 It will be the Policy of the Council to maintain an environment for all employees at all times that is as safe and healthy as is reasonably practicable.

2.2 The Council will, therefore, so far as is reasonably practicable control and manage the presence of asbestos in properties under its ownership and control and for all the services it provides.

2.3 In order to achieve the effective management and control of asbestos, the Council is committed to the assessment of risks to health and safety posed by the presence of asbestos to its employees and those affected by its operations. Effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review measures will be introduced as a result of such risk assessment.

2.4 The Council's statement of intent is to, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- maintain a safe place of work
- maintain a safe working environment
- assess risks associated with the presence of asbestos
- provide adequate resources to ensure the provision of the required instruction and training for all the Council's staff, as necessary
- confirm the commitment to comply with all asbestos related legislation, Approved Codes of Practice and related Health and Safety Executive guidance notes
- prevent exposure of employees, sub-contractors and members of the public to asbestos
- formally constitute an 'Officer Technical Group' who will represent all divisions of the Council to periodically review compliance with relevant legislation
- ensure that all asbestos present in buildings is maintained in a condition that minimises the risks of harm to health
- ensure that any asbestos waste arising from properties will be safely disposed of in accordance with the requirements of all

relevant legislation

- carry out asbestos surveys in all Council properties, whether owned, occupied or leased, from or to other parties and ensure that asbestos registers are kept and maintained
- that removal of asbestos will only be carried out by experienced and qualified contractors. Unless below minimum task duration or material quantity, operatives must have a valid licence under the provision of the Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations 1983.

2.5 The Council will, in the long term, strive to remove asbestos from all properties under its ownership and control, where it is reasonably practicable to do so.

2.6 All the works necessary to be undertaken to comply with the requirements of the policy will be to a realistic timetable, which will be devised to reflect both statutory requirements and budgetary constraints.

2.7 The Council's 'Asbestos Manual' will be the benchmark for managing and working with asbestos.

2.8 Attached to this policy document are guidance notes for managers, which will be of assistance in complying with the Policy.

2.9 The responsibility for implementing the provision of the policy and the preparation of an implementation strategy rests with each Director or Head of Service.

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR MANAGING ASBESTOS

1. TYPES OF ASBESTOS

1.1 There are three main types of asbestos. These are commonly known as:

* 'Blue' (Crocidolite)
* 'Brown' (Amosite)
* 'White' (Chrysotile)

1.2 All types of asbestos are regarded as dangerous, but blue and brown are known to be more hazardous than white.

1.3 It is important to realise that asbestos cannot be identified by colour alone.

2. WHERE CAN ASBESTOS BE FOUND IN BUILDINGS?

2.1 The main locations where asbestos can be found are:-

* sprayed asbestos and asbestos loose packing used in fire breaks in ceiling voids
* moulded or preformed sprayed coatings and lagging as insulation on pipes and boilers
* sprayed asbestos mixed with hydrated asbestos cement as fire protection in ducts, firebreaks, panels, partitions, soffit boards, ceiling panels and around structural steel work
* insulating boards as fire protection, thermal insulation, partitioning and ducts
* some ceiling tiles
* millboard, paper and paper products used for insulation of electrical equipment
* asbestos paper as fire proofing layer on wood fibre board
* asbestos cement products
* textured coatings
* floor tiles and coverings

2.2 Some of these materials are more vulnerable to damage and are more likely to give off dust. In general, the materials, which contain a high percentage of asbestos, are more easily damaged and the above list is roughly in order of ease of fibre release.

2.3 Appendix 'A' gives examples of installations based on 'categories of risk'.

3. WHO IS AT RISK?

3.1 A quarter of the people now dying from asbestos related diseases worked in the building trade. They were, for example, carpenters, joiners, electricians, plumbers etc. They may have breathed in asbestos dust during their day-to-day work with asbestos materials or because work with asbestos was carried out near them. Until recently it was thought that those now dying from asbestos-related diseases were exposed to large amounts of asbestos either regularly or during a single spell of work lasting from a few weeks to a few years. It is now thought possible that repeated low level exposures, such as could occur during routine repair work may also lead to asbestos-induced cancers. The scientific evidence on exactly what levels of exposure cause disease is unclear. **But we do know the more asbestos dust inhaled the greater the risk to health**. That is why it is important that everyone who works with asbestos should take the strictest precautions.

3.2 Many buildings still contain asbestos. So those examples of workers mentioned above may still be at risk when they carry out refurbishment, repairs, or maintenance work on buildings, which contain asbestos. Other workers, not normally associated with the building trade may also routinely disturb asbestos. For instance computer installers, particularly cabling installers, fire alarm installers, window blind fitters, or telecommunication engineers could also be at risk.

3.3 Asbestos will only pose a risk to health if asbestos fibres are released into the air. They form a very fine dust, which is often invisible to the naked eye.

4. HEALTH EFFECTS

The main recognised illnesses associated with asbestos are:

* Asbestosis: Fibrosis or scarring of lung tissue, making breathing more difficult. Irreversible and progressive, even at cessation of exposure. Associated with high levels of exposure.
* Mesothelioma: Cancer of the lining of the chest or abdominal wall, or lining around the heart.
* Lung Cancer: Increased incidence of lung cancer for those exposed to asbestos. Risk very much greater for smokers. All three types of asbestos may cause lung cancer.
* Pleural Plaques: Bands of scar tissue on lungs resulting from exposure to asbestos. Increased risk of developing lung cancer.
* Pleural Effusion: Causes fluid to accumulate around the lung as a

consequence of asbestos exposure.

* Skin Complaints: Asbestos fibres can penetrate skin and cause "asbestos warts".

* Other Cancers: Various research suggests evidence of cancer of the Larynx, Digestive Tract and Kidneys.

5. A FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING ASBESTOS

(i) Identify The Presence Of Asbestos In The Building

Look at the original building plans if available as they might tell you if and where asbestos was used. Look also at any old surveys that may have been carried out at the premises. As a guide, asbestos is likely to be present if:

* the building was constructed or refurbished between 1950 -1980 and particularly if it also
* has a steel frame
* has boilers with thermal insulation

As part of the identification process it will almost certainly be necessary to carry out a fresh survey from which the following information can be obtained:

* the location of the asbestos
* the form of the asbestos (lagging, ceiling tiles, partition boards etc)
* the condition of the asbestos
* evaluating the likelihood of asbestos fibres being released into the air
* type of asbestos present (blue, brown or white).

As part of the survey there may be a need to arrange to analyse samples of materials that you suspect contain asbestos. Do not break or damage material that may contain asbestos in an attempt to identify it. Samples should only be taken by suitable trained people. For example, they are likely to be suitably trained if the employer is accredited to the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS) which was formerly knows as the National Measurement Accreditation Service (NAMAS).

(ii) Assess The Condition Of Asbestos Materials

As indicated at (i) above, as part of the survey it will be necessary to assess the condition of the asbestos. For those surveyors carrying out the survey, as a general guide there may be a risk of asbestos fibres being released into the air if:

* material is being disturbed possibly by accidental damage in a prominent position
* the surface of the material is damaged, frayed or scratched
* the surface sealants are deteriorating
* the material is becoming detached from its base e.g., sprayed coatings falling from steelwork
* protective coverings are missing or damaged
* there is asbestos dust in the area.

If any of the above apply to asbestos material in any of the buildings surveyed action must be taken to either have it sealed, enclosed or removed.

(iii) Decide What To Do

Asbestos in good condition. If the asbestos is:

* in good condition
* not likely to be damaged
* not likely to be worked on

It is safest to leave in place and introduce a management system – minimum inspection, annually.

Asbestos in poor condition

If the asbestos is in poor condition or it is likely to be disturbed or damaged a decision must be made, (undertake a risk assessment by a person with specialist knowledge) whether it should be repaired, sealed, enclosed or removed. If there is uncertainty of the condition of the asbestos and it cannot be decided what action to take, specialist advice must be sought.

(iv) Take Action

Managing Asbestos left in place

There may be occasions when as a result of carrying out risk assessment, the asbestos will be left in place until a programme of removal has been prepared based on the degree of risk. To that end the following action should be taken:

* from the survey prepare an asbestos register of the locations
* prepare specific location plans traceable back to the asbestos register
* label the known locations of asbestos clearly with asbestos warning signs, or some other warning systems (for example, colour coding) so that those who need to know about the asbestos are effectively alerted to its presence
* prepare risk assessments for work on or near the remaining asbestos
* carry out periodic inspection of known locations – minimum annually.

It will also be useful and could save time and confusion if a note is made of the location of non-asbestos material, which could be mistaken for asbestos materials.

(v) Provide Information To Employees/Contractors

Make sure that employees involved in building maintenance work and any other contractors on the premises know the following:

* the locations of any asbestos in the building
* the type of asbestos - whether white, brown or blue
* the risks to their health if they disturb it
* an awareness of the asbestos register and any plans, and the possibility of coming across hidden asbestos materials which might not be recorded on the register
* the requirement to avoid contact or disturbing the asbestos, so far as is reasonably practicable.

If employees or contractors have to work on materials containing asbestos, make sure they know they are working with asbestos and the precautions they should take. Make sure they:

* keep all unnecessary personnel out of the work area
* take care not to create dust

* keep the material wet, wherever possible
* wear a suitable respirator and protective clothing
* clean up with a vacuum cleaner which complies with BS5W15 (Type 'H')
* dispose of any waste or contaminated materials properly – this will include a wetting agent.

Furthermore, make sure employees/contractors do not:

* break up large pieces of asbestos materials
* use power tools, which create more dust
* expose other workers who are not protected
* take protective equipment (e.g., clothing) home to wash.

Make sure both employees and contractors know when a licensed contractor is required, for example, the removal of certain types of asbestos.

6. TRAINING

As the removal of certain types of asbestos must only be carried out by licensed contractors, there is a need to focus on the managers' responsibility for overseeing such works.

Managers training requires:

* an awareness of the Asbestos Regulations and associated Approved Code of Practice and Guidance, including the assessment, control and licensing regimes
* an understanding of the risks to health posed by asbestos
* an understanding of an overall system for asbestos management
* how to identify asbestos in buildings, the role of the survey and asbestos register
* the options available for the safe maintenance of asbestos materials, including labelling
* communication with in-house employees and incoming contractors, to minimise the risk of inadvertent damage to asbestos materials
* the technical arrangements for the safe repair and/or removal of asbestos, including personal protection, decontamination facilities etc
* the monitoring and supervisory requirements for asbestos work, and how to draw up specifications for such monitoring work

* the arrangements required for dealing with a suspected asbestos incident, such as where a material known or suspected of containing asbestos, has been subject to damage
* the record keeping required for asbestos management.

7. KEEPING RECORDS

7.1 The record keeping required for compliance and proof of compliance with legal requirements and achievement of best practice is divided into three:

* records of what has been done
* audit and check reports
* communication - ensuring that everyone knows what to do and how.

7.2 In the case of asbestos management, records of asbestos identified by survey in the register is essential. Actions taken to rectify problems should be logged and filed. If there are matters generally communicated to employees by notice boards, memos, briefings, etc, (such as warnings of the presence of asbestos), keep a simple log of these as well.

8. ADVICE

Advice on the implementation of the policy can be obtained from the Health & Safety Team, Human Resources, Tŷ Elai, Dinas Isaf Industrial Estate, Williamstown, CF40 1NY.

EXAMPLES OF CATEGORIES OF RISK

The following installations are deemed **low risk**, requiring labelling (as appropriate), periodic inspection (e.g. annual) and information to contractors and others who may be in contact with the material:

- asbestos in floor tiles (unless tiles are brittle and breaking up)
- external asbestos cement such as pipe flues, roofing, in good condition
- internal asbestos cement ceiling, panelling, painted and in good condition
- asbestos cement water tank.

The following installations are deemed **medium risk**, requiring paint sealing or sealing off in some other way (such as sealing off a duct), labelling (as appropriate), periodic inspections (e.g. annual), and information to contractors and others who may be in contact with the material:

- internal chrysotile asbestos cement ceiling panelling, unpainted and some minor damage
- pipework insulation in good condition in inaccessible ducts from boiler house to main building
- ceiling tiles in good condition with no services running above requiring constant access.

The following installations are deemed **high risk**, requiring action, which in many cases will be in the form of complete removal as soon as may be safely arranged:

- amosite or crocidolite spray coating in poor condition with evident damage
- pipework insulation in boiler room with several areas of damage, particularly adjacent to valves etc, which need periodic re-packing
- amosite boarding forming ceiling tiles, where many services run in the ceiling void necessitating frequent access by maintenance staff, and this access has caused some tile damage.

APPENDIX 'B'

EXAMPLE OF A TYPICAL ASBESTOS REGISTER

Location	Installation	Type of Asbestos	Condition	Likelihood of Damage	Practical Action*	Frequency of Inspection
Outside Male Toilet 1st Floor	Ceiling Tiles	Amosite Board	Undamaged	Low - except during maintenance	None	Every 6 months
Boiler Room	Pipework insulation	Amosite & areas of Chrysotile damage	Good condition	Medium - damage during maintenance	Repair by licensed contractor	Quarterly
Under-ground Car Park	Spray coating on soffitt	Crocidolite	Poor condition	High - very soft and ceiling low	Planned removal by licensed contractor	To be removed before next inspection

* Note: Practical Action always includes labelling, consulting/informing employees, bringing to the attention of contractors. This column is used to indicate additional actions.

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MANAGERS CHECKLIST

	✓ As Appropriate		
	N/A	Yes	No
• Are managers aware of the three main types of asbestos commonly in use?			
• Are the health effects of asbestos being brought to the attention of all relevant employees?			
• Is the 'framework for managing asbestos' detailed in the guidelines being taken into consideration?			
• Are managers given appropriate training on their responsibilities for overseeing asbestos works?			
• Is the information given in Appendix 'B' and Appendix 'C' of the guidelines being noted and taken into consideration?			
• Are there monitoring procedures in place to ensure that the requirements of the policy are being met?			

Completed by: _____ Confirmed by: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Designation: _____ Designation: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____