



Asbestos in New York State

Facts and Responsibilities



What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral formed of very strong fibers that are resistant to heat and corrosion. There are several kinds of asbestos. Individual asbestos fibers are so small and light that they cannot be seen with the naked eye and can easily become airborne.

Where has asbestos been used?

Asbestos has been used for a wide range of manufactured goods and building materials. The amount of asbestos in asbestos containing materials (ACM) varies from greater than 1% to 100%. Examples of products that might contain asbestos are:

- fireproofing and insulation in buildings
- insulation for pipes and boilers
- roofing shingles and tars
- plaster, wallboard and joint compound
- putties, caulks, paints, and cements
- floor and ceiling tiles
- friction products, such as clutch facings and brake linings in vehicles

Some vermiculite products, widely used in insulation applications, may also contain asbestos. When ACM can easily be crumbled by hand pressure, it is called “friable” asbestos. Friable ACM is the type of greatest concern because it can easily release fibers into the air. As the binders (such as plaster and cement) that hold asbestos fibers in place deteriorate, are damaged or are disturbed, the likelihood of fiber release increases. ACM that is likely to be friable includes fireproofing on structural beams, sprayed-on ceiling texture or insulation, thermal pipe insulation and troweled-on plaster or acoustical insulation.

You cannot tell whether a material contains asbestos by looking at it. A sample must be analyzed by a qualified laboratory.

What are the health effects?

Breathing high levels of asbestos fibers can lead to an increased risk of lung cancer, mesothelioma (a cancer of the chest and abdominal linings) and asbestosis (irreversible lung scarring that can be fatal). The risk of lung cancer and mesothelioma increases with the number of fibers inhaled. Most people with asbestos-related diseases were exposed to high concentrations on the job.

Are any types of asbestos safe?

No. Although there are indications that some types of asbestos may be more dangerous than others, asbestos-related disease can be caused by all types of asbestos. However, ACM in good condition or encapsulated (contained within a sealant) generally does not pose a health hazard.

Is there any safe level of asbestos exposure?

There is no known safe level of exposure to asbestos. Any exposure can cause illness.



How does asbestos enter the body?

The most common way for asbestos to enter the body is through the air. Asbestos can also enter the digestive tract when you eat, drink or smoke in a contaminated area. Asbestos does not pass through the skin. Once they are inhaled, the fibers can remain and accumulate in the lungs.

How soon will asbestos-related symptoms or illnesses develop?

Though any asbestos exposure can cause illness, many people who are exposed will never develop an asbestos-related illness. Asbestos does not cause any immediate effects, such as coughing or illness. The diseases caused by asbestos appear 15 to 40 years after first exposure. This time lag is called the latency period. Even if you feel healthy while you are working with asbestos, you may get sick years later.

What should be done?

Usually, it is best to leave asbestos material that is in good condition alone. Generally, material in good condition will not release asbestos fibers. Try to prevent the material from being damaged, disturbed or touched. Asbestos in poor repair must be removed by specially trained and equipped workers following strict procedures to ensure that airborne asbestos does not spread to nearby areas (see next section for specific regulations and requirements).

Who can do asbestos work?

Workers or contractors who disturb ACM in any way must be certified and licensed according to New York State law, as regulated by the Department of Labor. There are 9 types of certifications:

- Asbestos Handler
- Restricted Asbestos Handler
- Air Sampling Technician
- Inspector
- Management Planner
- Operations and Maintenance
- Supervisor/Contractor
- Project Monitor
- Project Designer

To be certified by the Department of Labor, asbestos workers or supervisors must complete training courses approved by the New York State Department of Health. In these courses, they learn to follow the required safety procedures to ensure that asbestos fibers are not released into the air. Employers must also comply with notice and record keeping requirements.

Questions about asbestos abatement training and health-related issues should be directed to the New York State Department of Health, Center for Environmental Health, Bureau of Occupation Health and Injury Prevention at (518) 402-7900.



Asbestos Abatement in New York State

The New York State Department of Labor's Asbestos regulations (Industrial Code Rule 56) protect the public from exposure to asbestos fibers. This law requires that all work that disturbs ACM be done by trained workers following special procedures and engineering controls to prevent the spread of asbestos into the air and ensure ACM has been properly removed. The regulation protects people who live and work in buildings with asbestos and the workers who disturb the asbestos. The New York State Asbestos Regulation is posted on the internet at: www.labor.ny.gov/formsdocs/wp/cr56.pdf.

This regulation does not require building owners to inspect for or remove ACM that is present in their buildings. Often it is best to leave ACM that is in good condition alone. However, if demolition or renovation work is to be performed in a building, the owner must first determine if ACM will be disturbed. In order to make this determination, an asbestos survey must be conducted. The asbestos survey must be performed by a certified Asbestos Inspector. If the survey indicates that ACM will be disturbed by the planned project, the ACM must be abated prior to any work being done that would disturb it.

Questions concerning asbestos abatement projects in New York State should be directed to the New York State Department of Labor, Engineering Services Unit at (518) 457-1536. To find a certified asbestos inspector in your area, visit the Department of Labor website.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (NYSDOH):

NYSDOH regulates the training of employees who work in the asbestos abatement industry. Direct questions about training to the NYSDOH Center for Environmental Health, Bureau of Occupation Health and Injury Prevention at (518) 402-7900.

Direct questions about health-related issues, including public concern about exposure, to the NYSDOH Toxic Substance Assessment Program at (518) 402-7800.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (NYSDEC):

NYSDEC regulates the transportation and disposal of debris and materials generated from an asbestos abatement and removal project.

After the asbestos has been removed, the waste must be properly packaged and sealed prior to transport to a solid waste landfill. This process is regulated by the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Part 364, regarding Waste Transporter Permits. The areas covered by Part 364 include concerns about asbestos waste transportation, transport permits and asbestos transportation tracking. Part 360 of the same Code includes a definition of asbestos waste, regulation of transfer stations and land disposal issues.

Direct questions about asbestos transportation to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Materials Management, Part 364 Waste Transporter Permit Program at (518) 402-8792.

Direct questions about asbestos disposal to the NYSDEC Division of Materials Management, Bureau of Permitting and Planning at (518) 402-8678.



Asbestos Abatement in New York City

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Most asbestos handling in New York City, including abatement and transportation, is governed by New York City rules and regulations. Direct questions about asbestos issues in New York City to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, Asbestos Technical Review Unit at (718) 595-3682.

In New York City, the New York State Department of Labor licenses and certifies companies and workers who do asbestos work, and must also be notified about all New York City asbestos projects. The New York State Department of Labor has jurisdiction on work practices for projects conducted by or on the behalf of state agencies or public authorities, or on land owned or leased by state agencies or public authorities.

Federal Rules

THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (USEPA):

The USEPA regulates the list of National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP). The NESHAP regulations include the emission of asbestos-containing material. Direct questions about the federal regulations for asbestos materials to the USEPA Region II asbestos coordinator at (212) 637-3476.

THE UNITED STATES OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (OSHA):

OSHA has three standards to protect workers from the hazards of asbestos depending on the type of workplace. The three standards cover general industry, shipyards and construction. For complete information on all of the requirements, see the standard specific to the type of workplace on their website (see below).

Additional Information Sources

USEPA: www2.epa.gov/asbestos

OSHA: www.osha.gov/SLTC/asbestos/index.html

NYSDOL: www.labor.ny.gov/asbestos

NYSDOH: www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/asbestos/index.htm

NYSDEC: www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8791.html

NYCDEP: www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/air_and_noise/asbestos.shtml



Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. [When does a property owner have to get an asbestos survey done?](#)
- A. An asbestos survey must be completed by a certified Asbestos Inspector whenever all or part of a building or structure will be demolished, renovated, remodeled or repaired. The survey will determine if the planned work will disturb asbestos material.
- Q. [How do I find workers certified to do the asbestos-related work I need?](#)
- A. The Department of Labor maintains a list of licensed contractors: <http://labor.ny.gov/workerprotection/safetyhealth/active-asbestos-contractor-list.shtm>.
- Q. [The licensed Asbestos Abatement Contractor I hired is preparing a notification for the Department of Labor and says there is a fee. What are the notification fees?](#)
- A. Asbestos abatement projects are charged a notification fee based on their size. They are measured in linear feet, square feet, or both. Linear foot measurements are for projects where pipe insulation is being abated. Everything else is measured in square feet. The fees for each type of project is as follows:

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Linear feet: | Square feet: |
| 0-259 - \$0 | 0-159 - \$0 |
| 260-429 - \$200 | 160-259 - \$200 |
| 430-824 - \$400 | 260-499 - \$400 |
| 825-1649 - \$1000 | 500-999 - \$1000 |
| 1650 or more - \$2000 | 1000 or more - \$2000 |

Please note that if you have a project measured in both linear feet and square feet, you must pay the appropriate notification fee for each measurement.

- Q. [The licensed Asbestos Abatement Contractor I hired has told me that the asbestos in my project cannot be abated in accordance with New York State law. What happens now?](#)
- A. You must hire a licensed Asbestos Project Designer to prepare a site-specific variance request to be submitted for review by the Department of Labor. This will allow you to still have the abatement work done, as long as it adheres to the plan the Project Designer prepares and the Department of Labor approves. There is a \$350.00 fee to request the variance.
- Q. [My property has fallen down or has burned down. What is required to clean up the debris?](#)
- A. Buildings that are structurally unsound must have a letter of condemnation from the appropriate local official (often a Municipal Building Inspector or Municipal Fire Inspector). Then, the building may be demolished with the asbestos in place. The demolition must take place in accordance with Industrial Code Rule 56-11.5. This section of the code requires certain procedures for demolition, containment and disposal of debris, and decontamination of equipment and earth surfaces. These procedures protect against release of the asbestos into the environment.
- If the building is already completely destroyed, it can be cleaned up in accordance with Industrial Code Rule 56-11.5 without a condemnation letter. However, it is treated as asbestos debris cleanup and requires a site specific variance from the Department of Labor.
- In both cases, a licensed Asbestos Abatement Contractor must be hired to do the work. This is because an Asbestos Survey cannot be done, so debris must be considered to be asbestos-contaminated waste.
- Q. [There is an abandoned building that is a public hazard in my town. What can be done?](#)
- A. If the building has been condemned by the appropriate local official, the local municipality may have the building demolished and the debris pile cleaned up in accordance with Industrial Code Rule 56-11.5. If it has not been condemned, the property owner is responsible for the maintenance of the property and for any asbestos abatement in accordance with Code Rule 56.
- Q. [I want to do work on my own home. Must I get an Asbestos Survey?](#)
- A. Industrial Code Rule 56 does not apply to owner-occupied single family dwellings where the owners perform the work themselves. However, because of the health risks associated with exposure to asbestos we recommend hiring an asbestos contractor to do the work.
- Q. [How do I contact the Department of Labor Asbestos Control Bureau?](#)
- A. See the list of Asbestos Control Bureau district offices at: www.labor.ny.gov/asbestos.

Guide for Property Owners

I am a property owner* and I want to do renovations in or demolish a property. What must I do?

Hire a certified Asbestos Inspector to do an Asbestos Survey. Does the Asbestos Survey say that the work will disturb any Asbestos Containing Material (ACM)?

NO

Proceed with planned construction work as usual.

YES

Hire a certified Asbestos Abatement Contractor to abate the ACM before you have the renovation or demolition work done.

Submit a copy of the survey to the local government agency responsible for issuing permits for the planned work (all projects) and to the appropriate Department of Labor (DOL) Asbestos Control Bureau office (controlled demolitions only).

Does the Asbestos Abatement Contractor say the asbestos can be abated in accordance with Industrial Code Rule 56?

NO

Hire a certified Project Designer to prepare a Site Specific Variance. The variance must be reviewed and approved by DOL before the abatement work is done.

YES

The licensed Asbestos Abatement Contractor must submit a notification to the Department of Labor and the United States Environmental Protection Agency 10 days or more before the work starts.

Notify any residential or business occupants of the building on the floor(s) on which the work is being done and the floors above and below about the asbestos abatement. Notification must be in writing or verbally. Post a notice on all means of access to the floor(s), including doors, stairways, elevators, etc. Leave these postings in place until the work is complete.

Hire an approved air monitoring contractor to perform required air sampling during the course of the asbestos abatement work.

Once the asbestos abatement is done:

The certified Asbestos Abatement Contractor must provide a copy of the Project Record to you. Keep this record on site in accordance with federal regulations (typically for the life of the building).

*This guide does not apply to property owners of single family, owner-occupied properties where the owners do the asbestos abatement work themselves.

Contact Information

If you have any license or certification questions, e-mail: license&certificate@labor.ny.gov

If you have any asbestos questions, e-mail: asbestoscontrolbureau@labor.ny.gov

ENGINEERING SERVICES UNIT

State Office Campus, Room 154, Albany, NY 12240
(518) 457-1536 FAX (518) 457-1301

If you have any questions regarding Code Rule 56 or asbestos related variances, email:
ESU.SH@labor.state.gov

ABESTOS CONTROL BUREAU DISTRICT OFFICES

ALBANY DISTRICT:

Counties - Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Dutchess, Essex, Fulton, Green, Montgomery, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster, Warren, Washington.

State Office Campus, Room 157, Albany, NY 12240
(518) 457-1255 FAX (518) 485-8054
(518) 457-2072 FAX (518) 485-8054 (Field Office)

BUFFALO DISTRICT

Counties - Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates.

65 Court Street, Rm. 405, Buffalo NY 14202
(716) 847-7601 (716) 847-7126 FAX (716) 847-7138

NEW YORK CITY DISTRICT

Counties - Bronx, Kings, Nassau, New York, Queens, Richmond, Suffolk, Westchester.

One Hudson Square, 75 Varick Street (7th Floor), New York, 10013
(212) 775-3532

SYRACUSE DISTRICT

Counties - Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Franklin, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego, St. Lawrence, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins.

450 S. Salina Street, Syracuse NY 13202
(315) 479-3215 FAX (315) 479-3333