

What do I need to know about asbestos?

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral which was used in the production of building materials primarily used for insulation and fireproofing. There are three main types of asbestos:

- Chrysotile (also called serpentine or white asbestos);
- Amosite (also called grunerite or brown asbestos);
- Crocidolite (also called riebeckite or blue asbestos).

However, they cannot be identified purely by their colour. Asbestos was present in a wide range of building products used in the construction industry throughout the 20th Century. Although all products containing asbestos were banned in 1999, their use was extensive and the UK's legacy building portfolio still contains many thousands of tons of asbestos containing materials.

Why is it hazardous to health?

Asbestos-related diseases are currently responsible for over 5,000 deaths per year in Britain. There are usually long delays between first exposure to asbestos and the onset of disease, which can vary between 15 and 60 years. Whilst in most instances, asbestos containing materials left undisturbed and in good condition pose no risk to health, working with or disturbing asbestos can release small fibres into the air which if inhaled can cause fatal diseases. Tiny fibres can pass into the lower parts of the lung and may work their way through the lung lining, potentially causing:

- Asbestosis or fibrosis (scarring) of the lungs;
- Lung cancer; and
- Mesothelioma (a cancer of the inner lining of the chest wall or abdominal cavities).

What are the legislative requirements concerning asbestos in the workplace?

On 6th April 2012, the revised Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (CAR) came into effect. The original regulations strengthened overall worker protection by clearly defining exposure limits and making training for those who manage, or work directly, with asbestos mandatory. The new revision takes into account the European Commission's view the UK had not fully implemented, the EU directive on exposure to Asbestos (Directive 2009/148/EC).

What guidance is available?

To raise awareness of the duty to manage, and to promote effective compliance, the following HSE guidance is available:

- An Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) has been introduced to support Regulation 4 of CAR. 'Managing and working with Asbestos' (L143) gives advice on how to comply with the requirements.
- A guidance booklet, 'A comprehensive guide to managing asbestos' (HSG227) is aimed at those duty holders in more complex organisations.
- A free leaflet, 'A short guide to managing asbestos in premises' is aimed at those with smaller, less complex premises.
- HSG264 Asbestos: The Survey Guide - a guide for surveyors and Duty Holders. This guide provides a clear picture for both surveyors and duty-holders as to the surveys role in effective management.
- Asbestos Essentials; guidance on specific tasks



Assurity Consulting Limited

26 Redkln Way Horsham West Sussex RH13 5QH

t +44 (0)1403 269375 e info@assurityconsulting.co.uk

w assurityconsulting.co.uk

Registered in England and Wales Reg. No. 2227268

Corporate Member of IWFM

Independent Guide



What do I need to know about asbestos?

Independent workplace compliance

The duty to manage will require those in control of premises to:

- Take reasonable steps to find asbestos in the premises and assess the condition of these materials.
- Presume that materials do contain asbestos, unless there is strong evidence that they do not.
- Prepare a record of the location and condition of these materials and assess the risk from them.
- Prepare and implement a plan to manage those risks.
- Provide information on the location and condition of the materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them.

This guide is of a general nature; specific advice can be obtained from Assurity Consulting.

Assurity Consulting is the UK's leading independent compliance consultancy specialising in workplace health, safety and environmental solutions. We have over 35 years' experience of helping customers of all sizes, from across all sectors, manage their compliance responsibilities, making sure that their organisation is compliant, their employees are safe, their processes are cost effective and their management team is in control. Assurity Consulting can support you in managing asbestos in your buildings through the undertaking of management surveys and ongoing asbestos condition assessments, management systems and management reviews as well as providing training courses for those responsible for managing asbestos or likely to come into contact with asbestos.



Assurity Consulting Limited

26 Redkirk Way Horsham West Sussex RH13 5QH

t +44 (0)1403 269375 e info@assurityconsulting.co.uk

w assurityconsulting.co.uk

Registered in England and Wales Reg. No. 2227268

Corporate Member of IWFM