Asbestos in Construction Meeting Kit



ASBESTOS IN CONSTRUCTION

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that was mined and incorporated into products to make them stronger and fireproof. It made products safer by preventing fire, but it unfortunately causes deadly health effects, including malignant mesothelioma and pulmonary disease.

WHERE ASBESTOS IS FOUND

Asbestos is used in many products because of its high tensile strength, flexibility, and resistance to chemical and thermal breakdown. Asbestos is used in insulation, fireproofing materials, automotive brakes, cement and wallboard materials, floor tiles and roofing material.

THE ASBESTOS DANGER IN CONSTRUCTION

- The most common construction products that contain asbestos include insulation, cement, coatings, roofing, and flooring materials.
- Any building, including residential, commercial, industrial, and public buildings, constructed, or renovated before 2000 may contain asbestos.
- Asbestos exposure is a concern for people who work on buildings such as schools, hospitals, offices, retail shops, factories, warehouses, and residential structures.
- Anyone working with asbestos on a job site could expose construction personnel to hazardous fibers. This exposure rate is particularly severe on renovation and demolition jobs.

THOSE AT RISK OF ASBESTOS EXPOSURE

Any construction worker may be exposed during maintenance, remodeling, renovation, or demolition of older buildings.

- Boiler workers
- Carpenters
- Construction workers
- Demolition workers
- Electricians

- Firefighters
- Maintenance staff
- Painters
- Plumbers
- Roofing workers
- Steel workers
- Sheet metal workers
- Brick layers

HOW EXPOSURE TO ASBESTOS WORKS

Asbestos is only dangerous if it becomes airborne. To be a significant health concern, asbestos fibers must be inhaled over an extended period. Asbestos fibers then accumulate in the lungs. As exposure increases, the risk of asbestos-related disease also increases. If asbestos containing materials are not damaged, the asbestos fibers do not become airborne and do not pose a health threat.

ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASES.

Asbestosis is a Scarring of the Lung Tissue. The scarring impacts the elasticity of the lungs and lowers their ability to transfer oxygen and carbon dioxide. Asbestosis is a slowly progressive disease, taking 15 to 30 years to fully develop.

Mesothelioma is a Type of Cancer. This disease attacks the lining of the space holding the lungs, called the pleura. Mesothelioma is exclusively related to asbestos exposure. Mesothelioma may take 30 to 40 years to develop.

Lung Cancer is a Malignant Tumor in the Lungs. The tumor grows through the surrounding tissues, invading and blocking the air passages of the lungs. The time between exposure to asbestos and the occurrence of lung cancer may take 20 to 30 years.

FINAL WORD

Before you disturb asbestos (loosen the fibers) you must have special training. OSHA requires a “competent person” to be designated for all worksites that will involve asbestos work. The competent person should inspect the jobsite regularly, be knowledgeable of personal protective equipment, and supervise the work to be done to ensure all safety measures are being taken to prevent exposure to asbestos.