

## Training Requirements for Workers

### Working Near Asbestos-Containing Material

Training of maintenance and custodial staff, who perform routine activities on or near materials containing asbestos, is an important part of an effective O&M Program.

Training must include:

- What asbestos is and how it is used
- Health effects associated with exposure to asbestos
- Exact locations of materials containing asbestos in the building
- How to avoid disturbing materials containing asbestos
- How to recognize and report damage to these materials
- how custodial and maintenance staff must deal with materials containing asbestos to prevent fibre release, including wet mopping, wiping and HEPA vacuum cleaning techniques (see section viii for further information on HEPA vacuuming)
- Selection and use of protective clothing and respirators
- Procedures for the safe use, storage, handling and disposal of asbestos (additional information regarding disposal of asbestos is available from Manitoba Conservation)
- Procedures for dealing with asbestos dust
- Procedures in the event of an emergency involving asbestos
- Periodic and long term actions put in place to protect the health and safety of building occupants
- Names and telephone numbers of people responsible for asbestos related activities in the building

The employer must educate and train employees likely to work in areas where asbestos is present. The employer must ensure that maintenance and custodial staff are aware of the health risks, methods of prevention and proper work practices associated with asbestos. All custodial and maintenance staff whose work may disturb materials containing asbestos must receive training before performing their work. Training programs for custodial and maintenance staff must be reviewed every year, or more often, depending on changes in work conditions.

Maintenance staff required to work on materials containing asbestos must receive specific training relevant to that work. Depending on the specific tasks involved, maintenance staff may also need training in specific asbestos abatement techniques including:

- Isolation of the HVAC system
- Isolation of the work area
- HEPA vacuuming
- Methods to reduce fibre release
- Glove bag techniques for working around pipe insulation

- clean up and decontamination procedures
- Respiratory and body protection
- Disposal of materials containing asbestos

When work near or on materials containing asbestos may result in the material being significantly disturbed, consider employing contractors knowledgeable in asbestos abatement. Precautions should be taken before allowing outside contractors to work on or near materials containing asbestos. Provide all contractors with information about the location of materials in the building known or suspected to contain asbestos. The asbestos program manager or building owner must require proof that the contractor is familiar with the site-specific O&M program, has experience working with or around materials containing asbestos and has adequately trained workers. A trained member of the building custodial or maintenance staff should be present to oversee all maintenance performed by outside contractors on materials containing asbestos.

## **Notification**

If materials containing asbestos are found in a building, all building occupants must be informed and provided with basic information on how to avoid the potential hazard in the building. Building occupants, maintenance staff, custodial staff, outside contractors and others are unlikely to disturb the materials if they know the materials contain asbestos. Building occupants and users can be informed by distributing notices, holding information meetings and identifying the presence of materials containing asbestos on any tenders and drawings provided to contractors. All outside contractors must be notified of the exact location of the materials containing asbestos they are to work on, or may potentially disturb, prior to any work being done.

Building occupants need to know:

- exact location of materials containing asbestos – though it may not be necessary to inform every occupant of all locations throughout the building, each occupant must be made aware of the locations of materials containing asbestos that may affect them
- The condition of the existing materials containing asbestos
- The intended action for each location where asbestos is found (ex: abatement, leave intact, ongoing cleaning)
- The health hazards associated with asbestos exposure
- Directions not to disturb or damage any material containing asbestos
- any disturbance or change in the condition, of the material containing asbestos, such as crumbling, dust or debris accumulation, must be reported to the asbestos program manager

## **Competent Person**

The legislation states that an employer or owner must ensure that a person competent in identifying asbestos containing materials must prepare an inventory of ACM, keep the inventory updated and inspect the ACM on an annual basis at a minimum.

A competent person will be familiar with materials commonly found in buildings that may contain asbestos such as floor tiles and pipe insulation. A competent person will have received some training in asbestos awareness so they can work safely around asbestos and be able to identify materials in the workplace that could potentially contain asbestos.