

# Asbestos Frequently Asked Questions

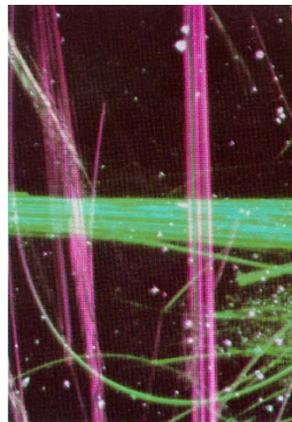
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## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral which is mined, processed, and used in many building materials. Since 1988, asbestos has been banned in most US building components; however, many older buildings may still have asbestos containing materials in them.



Mineral



Microscopic view of asbestos fibers

## What kinds of materials contain asbestos?

### Sample Asbestos-Containing Material List

- Acoustical ceiling texture (“popcorn”)
- Asphalt flooring
- Base flashing
- Blown-in insulation backing
- Boiler/tank insulation
- Breaching insulation
- Brick mortar
- Built-up roofing insulation
- Caulking/putties
- Ceiling tiles/panels/mastic
- Cement board/transite
- Cement pipes insulation
- Cement roofing shingles
- Chalkboards
- Construction mastics
- Duct tape/paper
- Ductwork flexible connections
- Electrical cloth
- Electrical panel partitions
- Electrical wiring insulation
- Elevator brake shoes
- Erkot roofing material
- Fire blankets
- Fire curtains/hose
- Fire doors
- Fireproofing
- Furnace insulation
- Gray roofing paint
- High temperature gaskets
- HVAC duct insulation
- Incandescent light fixture
- Joint compound/wallboard
- Laboratory hoods/table tops
- Laboratory fume hood
- Mudded pipe elbow
- Nicolet (white) roofing paper
- Packing materials
- Paper fire box in walls
- Paper on backside of fiberglass insulation
- Pipe insulation/fittings
- Plaster/wall joints
- Poured flooring
- Rolled roofing
- Roofing shingles
- Sink insulation
- Spray-applied insulation
- Stucco
- Sub flooring slip sheet
- Textured paintings/coatings
- Vapor barrier
- Vinyl floor tile/mastic
- Vinyl sheet flooring/mastic
- Vinyl wall coverings
- Window glazing/window caulk

This list does not include every product that may contain asbestos. It is intended as a general guide to indicate types of materials that may contain asbestos.

## **What are the health hazards related to asbestos exposure?**

The primary health risk is related to the inhalation of asbestos fibers.

Overexposure to asbestos fibers can lead to diseases such as lung cancer, asbestosis, and other related respiratory diseases.

Overexposure is generally a concern for the workers in the asbestos industry such as those people who mine the asbestos and those who abate (remove) the asbestos. Symptoms may arise 20 to 30 years after exposure for asbestos workers who are not protected with respirators and protective equipment.

People who live and work in buildings containing asbestos materials that are maintained in good condition are at very low risk for asbestos diseases.

## **How is asbestos removed (abated)?**

Abatement of asbestos is regulated under the EPA, OSHA, and DNREC. UD hires asbestos abatement contractors that have workers who are trained, licensed, and certified in the State of Delaware to conduct asbestos abatement.

The workers conduct the abatement using engineering control methods such as plastic sheeting to isolate and contain the work area, using wet methods to keep asbestos fiber counts to a minimum, and using High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) machines to filter the air and create a negative pressure in the work area.

All asbestos materials are double bagged or placed in drums prior to disposal off-site.

All workers wear personal protective equipment such as respirators, tyvek suits, and gloves.

## **What if there is an asbestos project in my area?**

All abatement work is conducted according to all Federal, State, EPA, and DNREC requirements. For more information, see *How is asbestos removed (abated)?* In addition, a third party environmental consultant conducts air sampling inside and outside of the work area during the abatement work to ensure that all work methods are strictly adhered to. A final visual inspection and final air clearance is also conducted prior to re-occupancy of the work area.

## **Who do I call if I have asbestos related questions?**

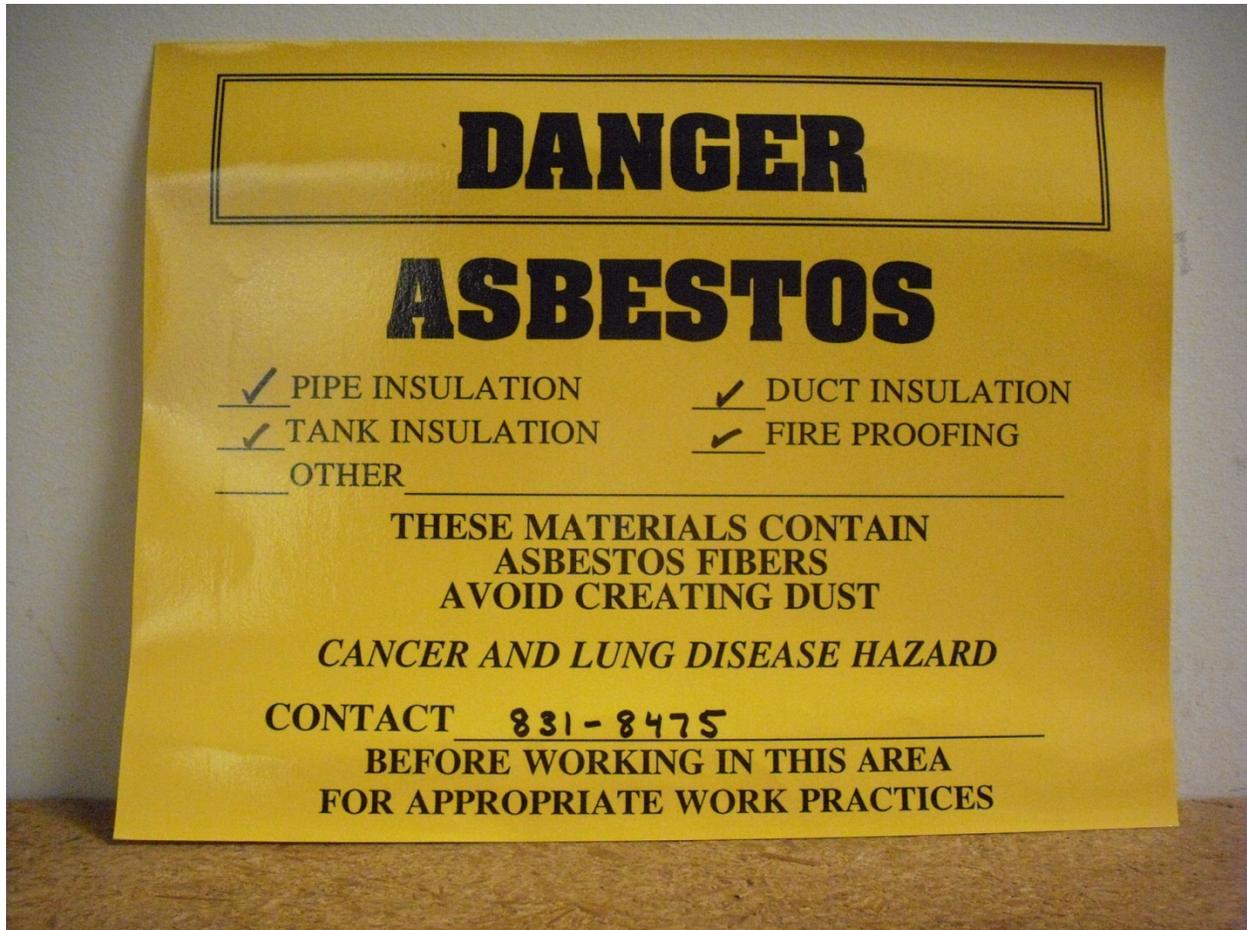
Contact the Environmental Health and Safety Department at 831-8475

## **What needs to be done prior to construction and renovation?**

Sampling of building materials must be conducted and sent to a laboratory for microscopic analysis to determine if asbestos materials exist. Sampling is conducted by a certified asbestos building inspector within the Environmental Health and Safety Department or by a certified environmental consultant.

If the asbestos materials will be disturbed during the construction work, the asbestos materials must first be abated by a certified and licensed abatement contractor prior to the renovation.

Some of the mechanical rooms have asbestos signs. What do they mean?



These signs are usually found on the doors of mechanical rooms.

The signs indicate that asbestos containing materials may exist in the room.

Contractors and people who are working in the room should contact the Environmental Health and Safety Department at 831-8475 prior to working in the room for additional information.