

## **Environmental Protection Agency Guidelines for Asbestos Removal**

Before the removal of asbestos-containing materials can be conducted, tests should be carried out to determine if the asbestos is likely to become friable i.e. likely to be reduced to dust. If it is likely to occur the following steps should be adhered to:

- *The number of persons involved in the removal of asbestos should be minimal.*
- *A warning sign should be erected near the working area.*
- *During removal, the asbestos should be soaked thoroughly in order to minimize the probability of fibres breaking and entering the atmosphere.*
- *Do not use compressed air to remove asbestos-containing materials.*
- *Objects within the working area should be covered with impermeable material or plastic.*
- *Removed materials should be wrapped in plastic sheeting and labeled.*
- *Disposal of asbestos-containing materials should be done at a secured landfill site.*
- *Do not burn asbestos-containing materials.*

## **REMEMBER !!!**

**Asbestos should only be handled or removed by a QUALIFIED person**

*For further information please do not hesitate to contact the Environmental Protection Agency at the address below:*



Ganges Street, Sophia, Georgetown, Guyana  
Tel.: (592)-225-5467-9 / 2062 / 1218 / 0506 / 6917 / 5471-2 /  
6044 / 6048  
Fax: (592)-225-5481  
Email: [epa@epaguyana.org](mailto:epa@epaguyana.org)  
Website: [www.epaguyana.org](http://www.epaguyana.org)

**DANGER**

# Asbestos



**Microscopic view of  
asbestos fibres**



## What is Asbestos ?

**Asbestos** is the name given to a group of six different minerals that are made of bundles of durable, heat resistant, noise absorbing fibres, easily transported by air.

There are three main types of asbestos minerals:

1. *Chrysotile* (white asbestos),
2. *Amosite* (brown asbestos) and
3. *Crocidolite* (blue asbestos).

## USES

Asbestos is commonly used for fire proofing, as a heat and sound insulation. Here is a list of some materials that may still contain asbestos:

1. Cement pipes
2. Vinyl floor tiles
3. Decorative plaster
4. Fire blankets
5. Fire doors
6. Chalkboards
7. Boiler insulation
8. Roof shingles
9. Electric Insulation
10. Laboratory gloves and table tops

## Why is Asbestos dangerous?

Human health is threatened when microscopic asbestos fibres become airborne and inhaled. Disturbance or improper removal and handling of asbestos containing materials can cause this.

Inhaled fibres can remain in the lungs resulting in several health complications. The three most serious health risks:-



### A) ASBESTOSIS

Inhaled asbestos fibres are trapped in lung tissue. The body tries to get rid of the fibres by producing an acid. However, the fibres are very strong and resistant to the acid. The acid scars the tissue of the lungs and eventually the scarring may become so severe that the lungs cannot function. Asbestosis takes about 25-40 years to develop.

### B) MESOTHELIOMA

Mesothelioma is a cancer of the outer lining of the lung, chest cavity or abdomen. This condition is fatal and has a latency period of 15-30 years.

### C) LUNG CANCER

Lung cancer can result from exposure to asbestos. The effects of lung cancer are greatly increased by cigarette smoking. The latency period for this type of cancer is often 15-30 years

## Safety Procedures

When dealing with asbestos the goal is to prevent it from breaking up. Here are several safety techniques:

- **DO NOT DISTURB:** *If asbestos material is in good condition do not disturb it.*
- **LESSEN ACTIVITY IN SUSPECTED AREA:** *If the material is damaged, activity in the affected area should be kept at a minimum or stopped altogether.*
- **DO NOT TOUCH:** *Do not touch the material!!!*
- **DO NOT WORK THE AREA:** *Avoid sanding, scraping or drilling into walls, ceilings or floors where asbestos might be present.*
- **KEEP AREA DAMP:** *If it is not possible to stop work keep the area damp to avoid fibres becoming airborne.*
- **ALWAYS WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING:** *This includes a filtered respirator, goggles, overalls, gloves and boots.*
- **DO NOT SMOKE:** *Remember smokers who work with asbestos are much more likely to get serious lung diseases than non-smokers.*
- **WASH HANDS AND FACE:** *during breaks or after work, wash hands and face.*
- **CLEAN AREA:** *do not let waste material accumulate, clean it up immediately.*