

Introduction

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 include the duty that employers shall provide appropriate training for all workers who are likely to be exposed to asbestos.

Although the risk in your respective trades is low, asbestos is present in and around both business and domestic premises, often located in places you would not suspect as having an asbestos content.

The information in this booklet will increase your awareness of the dangers of asbestos and how it can affect your life.

When taking work from the customer the Viabl Ltd will take every step to ensure that you are never sent to an environment that could put you at risk from the dangers of asbestos; however, there will be occasions when we will not be made aware that this hazard exists and it will be up to you to make a judgement and determine whether the environment is safe to work in. If you are in any doubt do not start work and seek further advice.

Asbestos-at-work regulations have set maximum exposure limits and require that all asbestos be identified and managed properly. Regulations also require that employees at risk from asbestos exposure be trained in asbestos safety precautions.

As a Viabl Ltd engineer, you are required to demonstrate that you have Asbestos Awareness training before we can give you any work.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a building material made from fibrous silicate minerals. It was used by manufacturers and builders in the late 19th century for its qualities in insulation, sound absorption and heat resistance. Asbestos was used in different forms, including paper, spray coating, boarding, cement and as loose-fill fibre. There are three types of asbestos – blue (crocidolite), brown (amosite) and white (chrysotile). Chrysotile is the most commonly used form of asbestos.



Dangers of Asbestos

Over the 20th century, investigations into the use of asbestos revealed it as a toxic material and a highly dangerous substance.

When asbestos-filled items are cut, or moved, fibres are released into the air. If inhaled, the fibres can become lodged and scar the lungs, causing asbestosis.

Visible damaged degraded or friable asbestos containing materials in the vicinity are indicators that surface debris or dust could be contaminated with asbestos

Other long-term health hazards include lung cancer and mesothelioma (cancer of the abdomen and the chest).

Smokers are at an even higher health risk to asbestos-related diseases.

Reports suggest that symptoms may not appear until 20-30 years after the initial exposure to the fibres.

Who is most at risk?

Persons who may inadvertently disturb asbestos containing materials while working in buildings are considered now to be most at risk from exposure to asbestos e.g. electricians, glaziers, plumbers, gas engineers, maintenance workers, joiners, computer engineers and even cleaners. Asbestos-related conditions and illnesses are invariably fatal, in the UK around 4000 individuals die each year from asbestos related conditions.

- Around 8 joiners die every week.
- Around 6 electricians die every week.
- Around 4 plumbers die every week.

How does asbestos kill?

Oesophagus

Cancer can develop from swallowing asbestos fibres.

Heart Blood flow to the lungs can become impaired and the heart can enlarge or fail.

Stomach & Intestines

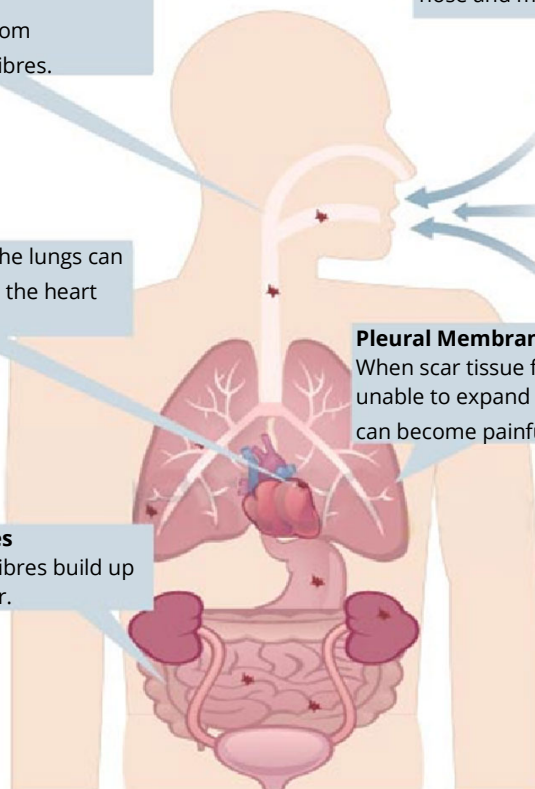
Swallowed asbestos fibres build up and may cause cancer.

Inhalation

Fibres enter the body through the nose and mouth by eating/drinking.

Pleural Membrane

When scar tissue forms here the tissue is unable to expand and contract. Breathing can become painful or even impossible.



Decline of asbestos use

In the 1970s, it became apparent that cases of mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases were on the rise in the UK. Legislators recognised that it was necessary to take action to control and possibly ban the use of asbestos as a toxic material.

Asbestos prohibition laws were first introduced in the UK in the mid-1980s, initially banning the import and use of blue and brown asbestos. White asbestos was ruled as a less lethal substance and remained in use. In 1992 the government ruled to limit the usage and it was eventually banned in 1999.

What types of buildings contain ACM's?

Any building built before 1999 may have Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's) used within them, either as structural elements of the building or installed into plant and machinery. These include domestic and commercial buildings. Most asbestos was used between the 1950's to the 1980's.

Below is a table which shows typical ACM's and their general asbestos fibre content. The table is in order of risk of fibre release if the material was disturbed.

Please also refer to the additional information showing pictures and images of different materials.

Types of ACM - Asbestos Containing	Typical asbestos content within the
Sprayed Coating	Up to 85%
Thermal insulation, lagging	Up to 85%
Fire resistant boards	16% - 40%
Asbestos textile materials	Up to 100%
Asbestos papers	Up to 100%
Cement sheeting, etc.	10% - 15%
Cement fascia's and soffits	10% - 15%
Vinyl floor tiles, linoleum, etc.	Up to 25%
Textured coatings, e.g. artex	3% - 5%
Composite toilet cisterns	10% - 15%
Asbestos plastics, etc.	Less than 10%

The risks from asbestos containing materials vary from high risk to low risk depending on several factors such as product, condition, action and location.

Common uses of asbestos



Asbestos Cement Boiler Flue



Soffit Boards



Boards around windows.



Roofing



Sprayed Coating



Ceiling Tiles



Floor Tiles



Toilets

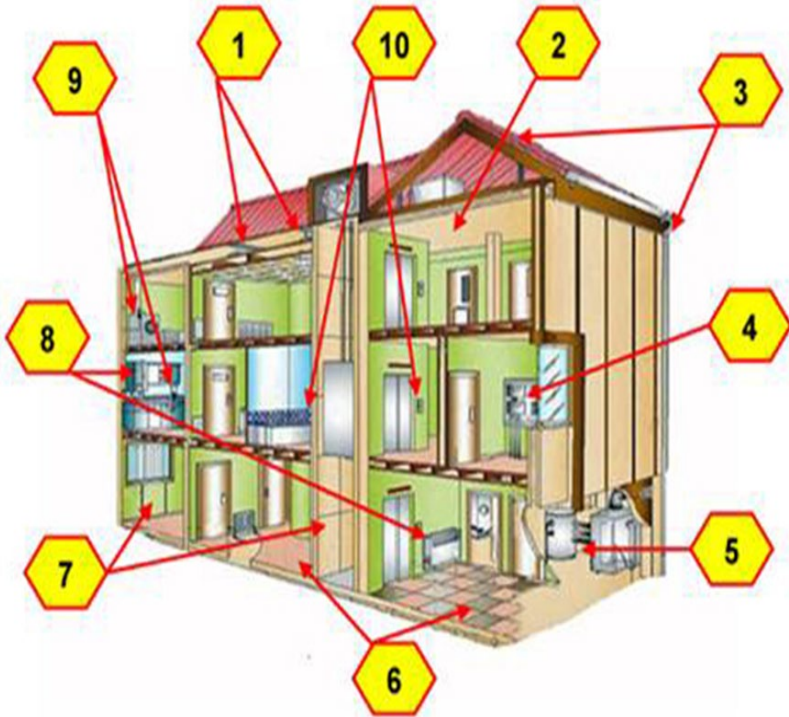


Meter Cupboards



Water Tanks

Asbestos around the home



1

Sprayed Coating

3

Asbestos cement sheets and moulded products

5

Insulations and lagging to plant and pipe work

7

Asbestos insulating board and wall

9

Textiles and Gaskets

2

Textured coating, e.g. artex

4

Electrical fuse boards and panels

6

Floor coverings and floor tiles

8

Gas and electrical heater

10

Other materials

Can I work with asbestos?

No. Work on asbestos is no longer carried out in the UK. The only form of asbestos work that is undertaken is asbestos removal. **This can only be completed by a trained engineer. A worker protection programme includes engineering controls, medical surveillance and personal protective equipment.**

How do I identify it?

Asbestos is only identifiable by those who know what they are looking for, as it looks like any other building material or substance.

Asbestos fibres are smaller than a human hair and not easily spotted by the human eye.

In many instances substances suspected of containing asbestos must be sent to a laboratory for analysis.

Asbestos cannot be thrown into the ordinary refuse system.

Any items found to contain asbestos should be labelled with the correct warning notice.

Asbestos Removal

During the 1990's, other asbestos-related laws passed stipulating that work on any asbestos insulation products (removal, etc.) may only be carried out by a licensed asbestos professional.

Asbestos-at-work regulations have set maximum exposure limits and require that all asbestos be identified and managed properly.

Regulations also require that employees at risk from asbestos exposure be trained in asbestos safety precautions.

Our engineers are required to hold certificates in Asbestos Awareness training.

What if I suspect or discover asbestos in a domestic customer's premises?

If you suspect that there is asbestos in a customer's domestic premises in the vicinity of where you are about to undertake work you may need to have it assessed to determine whether it is asbestos and to see what condition it is in. do not proceed, check with the occupant to see if they can give you any information, if not then phone the service team for further advice.

What if I suspect or discover asbestos in a commercial customer's premises?

Ask the building/site manager/supervisor for information on asbestos in the building or the area you intend to work.

If no information about asbestos is available and you are given a job here you suspect that it could be asbestos, stop, check and leave the site without touching anything. You have a legal right to know.

Remember, if you are working with other people they may not be aware of the dangers, or worse; not care.

Do not carry out any work until this has been done.

If it is intact, in good condition, and not damaged or likely to be disturbed, then it is best left alone. Do not drill, saw, scrub it or disturb it in any way.

Contact the Service Team for further advice.

What precautions can I take?

- **DO NOT** eat or drink around asbestos.
- **ALWAYS** wear the correct PPE - mask, respirator, gloves, suit.
- **USE** the correct products to handle asbestos.

In Summary

- Asbestos is a natural material found in certain rock formations.
- Friable asbestos is a material that reduces to powder by hand pressure when dry.
- You cannot use compressed air to 'clean off' asbestos contamination.
- Asbestos is very dangerous, especially to young people.
- It can be found in almost any pre-2000 building.
- If in doubt, stop work and check.
- Do not put yourself at risk - asbestos is a hidden killer.

- **Never:**

Drill

Saw

Cut

Hammer

Break

Damage

Disturb or move

Remember

- It is not a contagious disease
- It is perfectly safe unless it is disturbed and dust gets into the air

As an Able Group engineer, you are required to hold an Asbestos Awareness training certificate.

Contact Information

Service Team

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