

## **Asbestos Safety**

### **HEALTH HAZARDS**

Asbestos materials are health hazards because:

- Inhaled asbestos fibers can be trapped in the lungs, irritate lung tissue, and cause scarring. This inhibits the lungs' ability to process oxygen.
- Inhaled asbestos fibers have been linked to cancerous cell growth in the lungs.

University employees are to follow the procedures outlined below to prevent and/or limit exposure to asbestos and potential injuries.

### **RESTRICTIONS**

Only certified personnel may remove or disturb asbestos-containing materials.

Promptly report any accidental disturbances of asbestos materials to Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S); telephone 509-335-3041.

### **Cleanup**

Only state-certified personnel may clean up asbestos materials (see [Authorized Workers](#)).

### **Maintenance**

State-certified asbestos workers must maintain installed asbestos products in good repair.

### **LABELING**

Label all known asbestos-containing materials.

Post warnings in all regulated asbestos removal or control areas.

- Contact EH&S for further information concerning payment for asbestos warning signs and labels; telephone 509-335-3041.
- Environmental Health and Safety coordinates the posting of asbestos warning signs and labels with Facilities Services, Operations. Contact EH&S for assistance.

### **WRITTEN PROGRAM**

Environmental Health and Safety maintains the written asbestos program.

Contact EH&S for assistance.

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### **ASBESTOS MATERIALS**

#### **Possible Asbestos Materials**

Asbestos may be present in the following materials:

- Pipe insulation, tank insulation, boiler insulation
- Gaskets
- Fireproofing
- Popcorn ceilings, ceiling tiles
- Floor tiles, linoleum, mastics
- Roofing material, transite panels, and sheetrock.

#### **Assumed Asbestos Materials**

Until a lab analysis proves otherwise, assume that all building materials installed prior to 1980 contain asbestos. These materials include:

- All thermal system insulation (e.g., pipe insulation, boiler insulation, tank insulation)
- Sprayed or troweled surfacing material
- Asphalt and vinyl flooring

#### **Sampling**

A state-accredited asbestos inspector must sample all suspect materials prior to any disturbance, including maintenance, remodeling, or demolition.

Contact Facilities Services, Operations to arrange the sampling.

#### **AUTHORIZED WORKERS**

Only employees who have received current state-approved certification as asbestos workers, asbestos supervisors, or asbestos Class II workers may remove, cut, abrade, drill, sand, scrape or otherwise deliberately disturb any asbestos-containing materials.

These employees must have all of the following:

- Bi-annual respirator fit tests (see *SPPM* 3.24)
- Annual respirator training (see *SPPM* 3.24)
- Annual certification
- Annual medical surveillance exams. Contact Human Resource Services (HRS); telephone 509-335-4521.

Human Resource Services maintains copies of the exam records and sends annual reminders to employees to schedule medical surveillance exams.

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### **TRAINING**

All employees who could accidentally disturb asbestos-containing materials in the course of their job duties must receive training on:

- Identifying possible asbestos-containing materials.
- Preventing asbestos exposure.
- Regulatory requirements.
- Work practices.
- Personal protective equipment.
- Other topics as required.

Contact the EH&S asbestos program coordinator to arrange training.

### **BRAKE AND CLUTCH REPAIRS**

All brake and clutch repairs on motorized vehicles must follow specific work practices related to asbestos safety, as per WAC 296-62-07745, Appendix F.

Contact EH&S for more information; telephone 509-335-3041.