

# Airborne Understanding Provincial Worker Safety Standards

# Asbestos: Canadian Safety



## Occupational Health and Safety Requirements for Airborne Asbestos

### ALBERTA

The **Alberta Asbestos Abatement Manual** provides guidance on the safe handling, removal, and disposal of asbestos-containing materials in the province. It outlines procedures and best practices to ensure the protection of workers and the environment.

**Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Act** and regulations require employers to:

- notify the appropriate authorities before removing or abating asbestos
- ensure that workers who handle asbestos receive the necessary training to perform their work safely
- ensure that asbestos waste is stored, transported, and disposed of in sealed containers that are impervious to asbestos.

## **Safety (OHS) Regulation and Summaries**

The OHS Regulation contains the definition for asbestos and a hazardous work site. The definition of **“asbestos”** includes all forms of asbestos. A **“work site”** is an area of the work site where there is a reasonable chance that the airborne concentration of asbestos may exceed the occupational exposure limit (OEL) specified in the OHS Code.

The employer **must** ensure all work sites meet the following general provisions:

- Equipment used at a work site is properly maintained and used for the function it was intended. The employer must ensure that workers use, or wear equipment required by the legislation.
- Workers are competent, i.e., adequately qualified, suitably trained, and with sufficient experience to safely perform work without supervision or with only a minimal degree of supervision, or under the direct supervision of a competent worker.
- Workers are familiar with work procedures and are competent in the application, use, maintenance, and limitations of equipment or protective equipment.
- Workers are provided with adequate training in the safe operation of the equipment they use.
- If a worker may be exposed to a harmful substance at a work site, the employer must develop procedures to minimize worker exposure to that substance, provide training on the procedures, and ensure workers follow the procedures.

**Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Code requires that:**

- all workers must successfully complete government-approved asbestos training and be in possession of a valid asbestos worker certificate before they enter an asbestos-restricted area.

- all employers must give 72 hours' notification before starting asbestos projects.

## **Restricted areas**

- All workers in Alberta who enter a restricted area due to an asbestos hazard must successfully complete the asbestos worker course and be in possession of a valid worker certificate.
- A restricted area is defined as an area of a work site where there is a reasonable chance that the airborne concentration of asbestos, silica, coal dust or lead exceeds or may exceed the occupational exposure limit for one or more of the substances.

## **Non-restricted areas**

- Workers working with asbestos in non-restricted areas must be trained in accordance with sections 21 and 37 of the Code.

## **Certification term**

- Asbestos worker cards expire 3 years from the date of issue.

## **Projects that require notification**

Alberta OHS laws require that anyone planning a project where asbestos may be disturbed must notify OHS at least 72 hours before beginning activities that may release asbestos.

## **Asbestos projects that require notification include:**

- set-up operations that may release asbestos fibres.
- removing asbestos.
- demolition or renovation of a building or equipment containing asbestos.

Consult the **Alberta Asbestos Abatement Manual** and the relevant legislation and regulations for detailed information on the

specific requirements and procedures related to asbestos management in Alberta.

Further details on regulations under the **AB Occupational Health and Safety Act** (OHSA) can be found at [Alberta.ca](https://www.alberta.ca).

## **BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Under the **Occupational Health and Safety Act** in British Columbia, employers are required to take appropriate measures to protect workers from exposure to airborne asbestos fibers. These measures include:

- identify and assess the presence of asbestos-containing materials in the workplace. This involves conducting inspections, surveys, and tests to determine the presence and condition of asbestos.
- implement control measures to minimize the release and exposure to airborne asbestos fibers. This may include measures such as containment, encapsulation, or removal of asbestos-containing materials.
- provide appropriate training and education to workers regarding the risks associated with asbestos exposure, as well as the proper handling, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and safe work practices.
- report incidents or situations involving asbestos exposure to the relevant authorities, such as **WorkSafeBC**.
- provide a worker with task-specific work direction that addresses both hazards and necessary controls.

### **Prohibited Employer Practices**

- Employer must ensure crocidolite asbestos or material containing crocidolite asbestos is not brought into or used in a workplace.
- The spraying of asbestos or asbestos-containing material is not permitted.

- Pressure spraying equipment of any type must not be used to remove asbestos insulation or other asbestos-containing material from buildings or structures. The employer must not permit the use of compressed air to clean up or remove asbestos dust or debris, or dry sweeping or dry mopping of asbestos waste.

Consult the **Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (BC Reg 296/97)** for detailed information and specific requirements regarding airborne asbestos.

Further details on regulations under the **BC Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)** can be found at [WorkSafeBC](https://www.worksafebc.com/)

## **MANITOBA**

**Manitoba's Workplace Safety and Health Regulation (the Regulation)** describes what is required prior to, during and after renovation, demolition or alteration of structures with **ACM (Asbestos Containing Materials)**. If ACM is suspected of being present, prior to any work being done, the property owner, contractor or employer must ensure:

- The work area is inspected, and an asbestos inventory is prepared by a person competent in identifying ACM. The inventory identifies the locations, types, and conditions of all ACMs in the workplace.
- Either a competent person (a person possessing the knowledge, experience, and training needed to perform a specific duty) collects representative bulk samples of suspected ACM for analysis by an accredited laboratory, all or material suspected of containing asbestos are treated as ACM unless the material is found to be asbestos-free.
- Workplace Safety and Health is notified at least 5 days before starting work that may release ACM into the air. You can notify Workplace Safety and Health online at: [forms.gov.mb.ca/notice\\_of\\_asbestos\\_work/index.html](https://forms.gov.mb.ca/notice_of_asbestos_work/index.html)

- Asbestos that will be disturbed in the work area is removed prior to demolition or alteration work beginning. When ACM cannot be fully assessed and removed, such as after an emergency demolition activity because of FIRE LOSS, the work requires control measures implemented for ACM. Control measures include wet methods to prevent airborne ACM release during handling, transport and disposal of all potentially contaminated debris as ACM.
- An asbestos control plan is in place for handling and disposing of ACM in a manner that will prevent the release of asbestos fibers into the atmosphere.
- Control measures should be developed in accordance with the level of risk.
- Workers are trained in the safe work procedures for ACM.
- Worker and supervisor training should be conducted by a competent person having demonstrated knowledge and experience of working with asbestos.
- Workers are provided with appropriate personal protective equipment as determined by the scope of work, and be properly fitted for respirators if, and when, they are required.

Further details on MB Workplace Safety and Health Regulation can be found at [gov.mb.ca](http://gov.mb.ca) or [manitoba.ca](http://manitoba.ca)

## **NEW BRUNSWICK**

**WorkSafeNB** has created a guide to explain the risk from asbestos, where to find asbestos, and the legislated obligations around asbestos.

Asbestos is regulated by **General Regulation 91-191 under The Occupational Health and Safety Act.**

The law requires that the asbestos Code of **Practice (CoP)** be followed whenever there are any employees working in proximity to material containing asbestos or suspected of containing

asbestos. **WorkSafeNB** developed the **Code of Practice** to provide safe handling procedures to help minimize exposure to asbestos.

## **Owners and Employers**

If ACM is determined to be present (measured as greater than 1% by volume), **owners, employers and contractors** must adopt and follow the **Code of Practice** for Working with Materials Containing Asbestos in New Brunswick. **WorkSafeNB** developed this **Code of Practice** to help minimize the exposure to asbestos while the ACM remains in the workplace and to provide the requirements for abatement, encapsulation, training, and notifications.

Once ACM is confirmed to be in the building, **owners and employers** must prepare a written inspection report. This written report **must** be made available to all involved before any work is done that may disturb ACM. This information must also be communicated to contractors before building renovations or any demolition is undertaken.

## **Asbestos Management Program for Owners and Employers**

The **owner and employer** will need to decide if they are going to remove the ACM or leave it in place. If the ACM presents a hazard due to its condition, it must be repaired or removed.

While the ACM remains in the building, **owners, contractors, and employers** must develop and maintain an **Asbestos Management Program (AMP)**. The Code of Practice includes the steps **owners, contractors and employers** must take to develop, implement, and maintain an Asbestos Management Program.

If any renovations or demolition are planned in the building, **owners and employers** must inform employees (including any external contractors) of the existence of this AMP and communicate to these individuals any material or areas which were not tested.

**Employers and supervisors** must ensure the AMP has been shared with employees and that they are following the procedures.

**The employer shall ensure employees follow the procedures according to the level of risk.**

- Low-risk procedures
- Moderate-risk procedures
- High-risk procedures

Further details on regulations under the ***NB Occupational Health and Safety Act*** can be found at: [WorkSafeNB.ca](http://WorkSafeNB.ca) or [laws.gnb.ca](http://laws.gnb.ca)

## **NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR**

In **Newfoundland and Labrador**, the laws and regulations regarding airborne asbestos are in place to protect workers from the hazards of asbestos exposure.

**Asbestos Abatement Regulations:** The **Asbestos Abatement Regulations, 1998**, under the **Occupational Health and Safety Act**, outline the requirements and the safe handling, removal, and disposal of asbestos-containing materials in workplaces.

**Types of Asbestos Work:** Asbestos work in Newfoundland and Labrador is classified into different types based on the level of risk involved. These types include low-risk activities (Type I), medium-risk activities (Type II), and high-risk activities (Type III).

**Airborne Asbestos Monitoring:** The extent and potential extent of a worker's exposure to airborne asbestos fibers, is crucial to ensure worker safety.

**Cleaning with Compressed Air:** Cleaning with compressed air is generally prohibited in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Employers, contractors, and owners must:**



- Monitor the use or presence of asbestos at the workplace.
- Make sure that materials suspected of containing asbestos are handled as if they are asbestos-containing until a competent laboratory determines otherwise.
- Assess the risk of exposure of workers to airborne asbestos fibers. The risk assessment must:
  - Be compiled in writing by a qualified person (for asbestos risk assessment) and in consultation with the OHS Committee or WHS Representative.
  - Consider the extent and potential extent of a worker's exposure to airborne asbestos fibers, the measures, and procedures necessary to control exposure, and whether the asbestos-containing material is a friable material or non-friable material.
  - Bear the cost of identification, monitoring, and other associated activities for the protection of workers.

Before work begins to demolish or salvage machinery, equipment, buildings, or structures, **an employer, contractor or owner** must:

- Inspect the site to identify asbestos-containing materials that may be handled, disturbed, or removed;
- Make the results of the inspection available to workers at the worksite, including drawings, plans, or specifications showing the location of asbestos-containing materials;
- Make sure that the asbestos-containing materials found are safely contained or removed; and
- Stop all work until the asbestos-containing materials found during demolition or salvage work are contained or removed.

Further details on regulations under the **NL Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act)** can be found at: [WorkplaceNL.ca](http://WorkplaceNL.ca)

## **NOVA SCOTIA**

The OHSA in Nova Scotia is known as the **Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)**. It is the primary legislation that governs workplace health and safety in the province. The Act aims to protect workers from occupational hazards and ensure their health and safety while on the job.

The **Occupational Health and Safety Act** in Nova Scotia includes provisions and regulations to address the risks associated with asbestos exposure which **requires employers** to:

- Identify and assess the presence of asbestos in the workplace. This involves conducting inspections, surveys, and tests to determine the presence and condition of asbestos-containing materials.
- Implement control measures to minimize the release and exposure to airborne asbestos fibers. This may include measures such as containment, encapsulation, or removal of asbestos-containing materials.
- Provide appropriate training and information to workers regarding the risks associated with asbestos exposure, as well as the proper handling, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and safe work practices.
- Report any incidents or situations involving asbestos exposure to the appropriate authorities, such as the **Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education**.

Further details on regulations under the **NS Occupational Health and Safety Act** can be found at: [NovaScotia.ca](https://www.novascotia.ca).

## **ONTARIO**

In Ontario, the laws and regulations regarding airborne asbestos are designed to protect workers from the hazards of asbestos exposure.

The **Ontario Regulation 278/05** specifically focuses on asbestos on construction projects and in buildings and repair

operations. It provides guidelines and measures to manage asbestos in these settings.

**Employers have duties to provide appropriate respiratory protection to workers in situations where airborne asbestos exposure cannot be adequately controlled.**

**ONTARIO REGULATION 278/05 OF THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT PROVIDES INFORMATION FOR WORKERS' SAFETY.**

This regulation applies whenever a worker is to do work that,

(a) involves material that,

(i) is **asbestos-containing material** (ACM),

(ii) is being treated as if it were **asbestos-containing material**,

(iii) is the subject of advice from an employer who is not an owner or a notice; or

(b) is to be carried on in close proximity to ACM and may disturb it.

The constructor or employer **shall** advise the worker and provide him or her with the following information:

1. The location of all ACM.
2. For each location, whether the material is friable or non-friable.
3. In the case of sprayed-on friable material, for each location,
4. if the material is known to be asbestos-containing material, the type of asbestos, if known, **or**
5. in any other case, a statement that the material will be treated as though it contained a type of asbestos other than chrysotile.

**Responsibility of employer other than the owner**

An employer whose workers work in a building of which the employer is not the **owner shall** advise the owner if the workers discover material that may be asbestos-containing material in the building.

### **Owner's responsibilities before requesting tender or arranging work**

An **owner shall** comply with all requirements in this regulation before,

(a) requesting tenders for the demolition, alteration or repair of all or part of machinery, equipment, or a building, aircraft, locomotive, railway car, vehicle or ship; **or**

(b) arranging or contracting for any work described in clause (a), if no tenders are requested.

The **owner shall** have an examination carried out to establish whether any material that is likely to be handled, dealt with, disturbed, or removed, whether friable or non-friable, is asbestos-containing material.

An examination is not required if,

(a) the owner,

(i) already know that the material is not asbestos-containing material, **or**

(ii) already knows that the material is asbestos-containing material and, in the case of sprayed-on friable material, knows the type of asbestos; **or**

(b) the work is being arranged or contracted for in accordance with this Regulation as though the material were asbestos-containing material and, in the case of sprayed-on friable material, as though it contained a type of asbestos other than chrysotile. 0. Reg. 278/05, s. 10 (3).

Whether an examination is required or not, the **owner shall** have a report prepared,

(a) stating whether,

(i) the material is or is not asbestos-containing material, or

(ii) the work is to be performed in accordance with this Regulation as though the material were asbestos-containing material and, in the case of sprayed-on friable material, as though it contained a type of asbestos other than chrysotile;

(b) describing the condition of the material and stating whether it is friable or non-friable; and

(c) containing drawings, plans and specifications, as appropriate, to show the location of the material identified under clause (a).

An **owner shall** give any prospective constructor a copy of the complete report prepared pursuant to an examination.

This applies, with respect to,

(a) a constructor and a prospective contractor; **and**

(b) a contractor and a prospective subcontractor

**The constructor or employer shall** immediately notify, orally and in writing of any asbestos material,

(a) an inspector at the office of the Ministry of Labour nearest the workplace;

(b) the owner;

(c) the contractor; and

(d) the joint health and safety committee or the health and safety representative, if any, for the workplace.

No work that is likely to involve handling, dealing with,

disturbing or removing the asbestos material **shall** be done unless,

(a) it has been determined under whether the material is asbestos-containing material; **or**

(b) the work is performed in accordance with this Regulation as though the material were asbestos-containing material and, in the case of sprayed-on friable material, as though it contained a type of asbestos other than chrysotile.

(Further details on regulations under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act can be found at: [Ontario.ca](http://Ontario.ca).)

## **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

The **Occupational Health and Safety Act General Regulations in Prince Edward Island** require employers to monitor the concentration of airborne asbestos in the workplace to ensure the safety and health of workers.

### **Employers or Owners Must:**

- Make sure nobody uses, applies, or installs asbestos or asbestos containing material.
- Make sure that nobody remediates, disturbs, or works with asbestos-containing material without using appropriate methods to contain the fibres and keep the contamination in the air to below the threshold limit values.
- When a material is suspected to contain asbestos, it is treated as though it does until a competent person determines that it is free of asbestos.
- Make sure that before the demolition of a building, structure, all or part of machinery, equipment, aircraft, vehicle or vessel, all material that could release asbestos fibres into the atmosphere are removed.

- The asbestos contractor must make sure all asbestos work is done so that it does not create a risk to the health or safety of any worker or other people.

Monitor the concentration of airborne asbestos in the workplace and exposure of workers to asbestos, using a recognized method approved by the Director.

- Maintain records of the monitoring, and keep these records for at least 40 years.
- Provide copies of these records as soon as possible to the workers and their JOSH committee or representative.
- Make sure that workers handling, disturbing, or removing any asbestos-containing material have successfully completed an asbestos abatement course.
- Make sure that workers transporting or handling sealed containers of asbestos-containing material have successfully completed an asbestos awareness course acceptable to the Director.
- Reduce or eliminate exposure of workers to asbestos-containing material to the lowest practical level using all available and required procedures including using engineering controls, work practices and hygiene practices.
- Make sure exposures do not exceed the established threshold limit values.

### **Worker Responsibilities**

- Follow the safe work practices and procedures that comply with the regulatory requirements.
- Make sure not to eat, drink or smoke in an asbestos work area. [OHS General Regs., S. 49.15 (2)]
- Use the personal protective equipment provided by the employer and maintain the equipment in good condition.
- Participate fully in an established medical surveillance program.

Further details on regulations under the **PE OHS Act** can be

found at: [ohsguide.wcb.PE.ca](https://ohsguide.wcb.pe.ca)

## **QUÉBEC**

OHSA in Québec is known as the **Act Respecting Occupational Health and Safety** (Loi sur la santé et la sécurité du travail). It is the primary legislation that governs workplace health and safety in the province.

The **Act Respecting Occupational Health and Safety** in Québec includes provisions and regulations to address the risks associated with asbestos exposure. These regulations **require employers** to:

- identify and assess the presence of asbestos in the workplace. This involves conducting inspections, surveys, and tests to determine the presence and condition of asbestos-containing materials.
- **mandate employers** to implement control measures to minimize the release and exposure to airborne asbestos fibers. This may include measures such as containment, encapsulation, or removal of asbestos-containing materials.
- provide appropriate training and information to workers regarding the risks associated with asbestos exposure, as well as the proper handling, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and safe work practices.
- **require employers** to report any incidents or situations involving asbestos exposure to the appropriate authorities, such as the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST).

Detailed information on the specific provisions and requirements related to airborne asbestos workplace safety in Québec, can be referenced in the Act Respecting Occupational Health and Safety and any associated regulations and at: [cnesst.gouv.QC.ca](https://cnesst.gouv.QC.ca)



## **SASKATCHEWAN**

In Saskatchewan, Canada, the **Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)** regulates workplace safety, including measures related to airborne asbestos particles.

Under the **OHSA**, employers in Saskatchewan have a general duty to provide a safe and healthy work environment for their employees. This includes identifying and assessing potential hazards, implementing control measures to minimize exposure to hazardous substances, and providing appropriate training and personal protective equipment (PPE) to workers.

### **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

**Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996** require specific actions when asbestos is a potential health hazard in a workplace.

#### **The duties of employers, contractors, or owners**

- identifying and labeling asbestos-containing materials (ACM) that can release asbestos fibres;
- keeping a current written record of all ACM present in the workplace;
- conducting regular surveillance and maintenance of asbestos materials to prevent fiber release;
- conducting work in a way that prevents the release of asbestos fibers as much as possible;
- developing a written control plan if work must be done in a manner that may release asbestos fibres;
- notifying, informing, and training workers; and
- notifying Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) at least 14 days before beginning a high risk asbestos process

### **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

An **Asbestos Management Program (AMP)** helps to prevent the release of asbestos fibres into occupied areas of a building by identifying and managing **asbestos-containing materials**

**(ACM)**. It is intended to prevent the release of asbestos fibres into the air and to protect building occupants from exposure. The **AMP** must continue unless all materials containing asbestos have been removed or the building has been demolished.

The program should:

- name a designated asbestos program manager;
- identify all building areas included in the plant;
- state where an inventory of **ACM** will be kept in the building;
- show how building occupants, maintenance staff, external contractors, and others will be informed of the presence of asbestos;
- describe how materials containing asbestos will be labeled or identified;
- state when periodic surveillance and maintenance will be performed (required at least annually) and what job position(s) is(are) responsible;
- identify asbestos processes and what steps will be used to prevent fiber release;
- identify how the written asbestos control plans will be developed and implemented for asbestos processes, where fiber release may occur (e.g., certain repair and maintenance activities, or when unexpected releases occur);
- identify which staff need to be trained in asbestos control procedures; and
- provide details about when persons with specialized competencies may be needed.

## **1. TRAINING**

The employer **must** educate and train workers who may work in areas where asbestos is present. 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 should be reviewed every year, or more often, depending on changes in work conditions.

**Training must include:**

- an explanation about what asbestos is and how it is used;
- the health effects associated with exposure to asbestos;
- the exact locations of materials containing asbestos in the building;
- how to avoid disturbing **ACM**;
- how to recognize and report damage to these materials;
- the procedures for how custodial and maintenance staff must deal with ACM to prevent fiber release, including wet mopping, wiping, and high-efficiency particulate air (**HEPA**) filter vacuum cleaning techniques;
- how to select and correctly use the appropriate protective clothing and respirators;
- the procedures for the safe use, storage, handling, and disposal of asbestos (additional information regarding disposal of asbestos is available from the **Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment**);
- the procedures for preventing asbestos fiber release and exposure;
- the procedures in the event of an emergency involving asbestos;
- the periodic and long-term actions put in place to protect the health and safety of building occupants; and
- the names and telephone numbers of people responsible for asbestos related activities in the building.

## **2. INSPECTIONS – PERIODIC**

Periodically inspecting all asbestos-containing materials identified in the inventory is essential to the **AMP**. The inspection and damage reports that trained custodial and maintenance staff perform can identify damage or

deterioration. Repairs to asbestos surfaces **must** be done immediately to prevent the breaking off of asbestos or the release of asbestos fibers. The surface **must** be kept wet during a repair. If this is not possible, other means **must** be used to contain any fibers. This system will allow corrective action to take place before any exposure risk occurs.

All friable **ACM** and all sprayed-on asbestos surfaces **must** be regularly inspected by the **employer, contractor, or owner** and **must** also, at least annually, be inspected by a competent person to confirm that the material is not releasing, and is not likely to release, asbestos dust into the atmosphere.

When completing the annual inspection, the following information, **must be recorded**:

- the location of the **ACM**;
- the type of material containing asbestos;
- the present abatement status, if any (encapsulated, enclosed, or neither);
- evidence of physical damage;
- evidence of water damage;
- evidence of delaminating or other deterioration;
- the degree of material accessibility;
- the level of work activity near the material; and
- the location of nearby air plenums, air shafts, or air streams, if any.

### **3. PROPER CLEANING PROCEDURES**

Only wet mopping/wiping or specialized vacuuming may be used to clean surfaces that may be contaminated with asbestos. Vacuuming **must** be conducted with a high efficiency particulate air (**HEPA**) vacuum cleaner that is tested and certified annually. A HEPA vacuum cleaner has an efficient filter that traps the microscopic asbestos fibers responsible for human health effects. Ordinary vacuum cleaners may allow tiny asbestos fibers to pass through the filter or bag, re-enter

the work area, and be spread to other areas of the workplace.

A dust suppressant could also be used on mops. Wetting surfaces reduces the potential for asbestos dust to become airborne. Dry brooms, mops, dust cloths, and standard household or shop vacuum cleaners must not be used for asbestos clean-up as they may create a risk of airborne exposure to asbestos fibers.

If there is a possibility that irregular surfaces (e.g., curtains, books, furniture, and carpeting) may be contaminated with asbestos, cleaning should be done with a **HEPA** vacuum. Other surfaces, such as walls, non-carpeted floors, light fixtures, exteriors of air handling ducts, and filing cabinets should be cleaned using mops and dust cloths or rags that are wetted with amended water. Properly trained workers performing this initial decontamination must wear an appropriate respirator and body protection.

**Some residential-type vacuums identified as having HEPA filters are more effective than older vacuums but do not meet the filtration efficiency required by the Regulations. Ensure that the HEPA vacuum being used meets the occupational health and safety standard.**

#### **4. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

**Custodial and maintenance staff** must ensure that their activities do not damage or disturb materials containing asbestos.

##### **DO NOT:**

- drill holes into material containing asbestos;
- hang pictures, signs (except asbestos warning signs), clothing, plants, or any other articles on structures covered with materials containing asbestos;
- sand, saw, or grind floor tiles, hardboard panels, or other materials that may contain asbestos;

- damage materials containing asbestos while moving furniture or other objects;
- install curtains, drapes, or dividers in such a way that they damage materials containing asbestos;
- dust floors, ceilings, moldings, or other surfaces with a dry brush, or sweep with a broom in an environment containing asbestos;
- use an ordinary vacuum to clean up debris containing asbestos;
- remove ceiling tiles below materials containing asbestos without wearing proper respiratory protection, clearing the area of other people, and observing asbestos waste disposal procedures;
- remove potentially contaminated ventilation system filters in a dry state; and
- shake potentially contaminated ventilation system filters.

Further details on regulations under the **Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety Act** can be found at: [WorkSafeSASK.ca](http://WorkSafeSASK.ca)

## **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT**

The **Northwest Territories and Nunavut have Occupational Health and Safety Acts and Regulations**, which provide guidelines and requirements for workplace safety to ensure the health and safety of workers related to exposure to airborne asbestos.

The specific regulations regarding asbestos in the Northwest Territories can be found in the Asbestos Safety Regulations, which are issued under the authority of **Section 22 of the NWT Safety Act**. These regulations aim to maintain employee exposure to hazardous airborne asbestos below specified limits.

## **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY BEST PRACTICES FOR AIRBORNE ASBESTOS**

## **Definitions**

- “asbestos waste” means material that is discarded because there is a reasonable chance that asbestos might be released from it and become airborne, including protective clothing that is contaminated with asbestos.
- “exposed worker” means a worker who may reasonably be expected to work in a restricted area at least 30 work days in a 12-month period.
- “restricted area” means an area of the work site where there is a reasonable chance that the airborne concentration of asbestos exceeds the Occupational Exposure Limit (OEL).

## **Employer’s General Duties When Dealing with Asbestos**

- minimize the release of asbestos into the air, keeping work exposure as low as reasonably achievable/practicable, but never exceeding the OEL;
- keep the work site clear of unnecessary accumulations of asbestos waste and materials containing asbestos;
- ensure that decontamination of workers and materials does not result in release of airborne fibers;
- label all asbestos waste as “Carcinogenic – Do not inhale dust”;
- ensure that containers used to dispose of asbestos are sealed and impervious to asbestos;
- provide a means to prevent workers’ street clothes from being contaminated;
- ensure that only authorized persons enter a restricted area;
- post signs around restricted areas warning of the hazards and keep the signs posted until the area is no longer restricted;
- provide workers with, and ensure they wear, appropriate protective clothing and respirators; and
- make sure that workers decontaminate themselves before

leaving a restricted area.

## EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1. Monitoring for airborne concentrations of asbestos fibers

- If a worker may be exposed to a harmful substance at a work site the employer **needs** to identify the health hazards associated with exposure and assess the worker's exposure.
- If a worker may potentially be exposed to asbestos at the work site when an asbestos-containing material is disturbed (whether or not the employer knows that the OEL is being complied with), the employer **must** conduct monitoring to determine what the worker is exposed to.
- If a worker may be exposed in excess of the OEL the **employer is required** to take additional specific actions, in addition to conducting air monitoring. Some monitoring is needed for every asbestos abatement project, particularly for high-risk projects (projects that are "restricted areas").

### 2. Worker training

- The **employer must ensure** that all workers who may enter a "restricted area" successfully complete an asbestos abatement awareness course.
- Training **must** be provided that is appropriate to the level of worker involvement in the project. The training should, at a minimum, contain the following elements:
  - health hazards associated with exposure to asbestos;
  - responsibility of workers, employers, contractors, and suppliers under the Safety Act;
  - asbestos requirements;
  - safe work procedures related to the work, see Chapter 5 of this code, as appropriate; and
  - how to properly wear, use, and maintain personal



protective equipment that will be used at the work site.

### 3. Worker health assessment

Each worker **must** undergo a health assessment within 30 days of becoming an exposed worker, and every two years thereafter. At the time the worker becomes an exposed worker, the **employer is responsible** for ensuring that the health assessment is done.

The assessment **must** be conducted by a qualified physician and consist of a chest x-ray, including a radiologist's report, a pulmonary function test and a worker's work history.

The cost of medical testing and the time taken to undergo the tests **must** be borne by the employer.

### 4. Safe work procedures

- Asbestos is identified as a designated substance. If there is more than 10 kg of pure asbestos, or asbestos-containing material that has more than 0.1 percent asbestos by weight and the amount exceeds 10 kg, the **employer must establish a safe work practice** governing the storage, handling, use, and disposal of the asbestos.
- If there is a possibility that the fibers may be released in an uncontrolled manner, **the employer must** also establish procedures to be followed to prevent uncontrolled release and procedures to be followed in the event of a release.
- Safe work practices are not mandatory for materials containing less than one percent asbestos by weight. This applies to the specific material, not the total waste. **The employer is responsible** to complete the hazard assessment and identify situations where there is a potential for asbestos fiber release. In these situations,
- **The employer must ensure** that work procedures are in

place and workers are appropriately trained on these procedures.

- **Employers must** conduct risk assessments, implement appropriate control measures, provide training and personal protective equipment, and follow safe removal and disposal practices.

To obtain specific and up-to-date information on the OHS Acts and Regulations for airborne asbestos in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, refer to official government sources such as the Northwest Territories Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission and the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment in the Northwest Territories.

For Nunavut, can refer to the Nunavut Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Nunavut Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.

(Further details on regulations under the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Occupational Health and Safety Act can be found at: [Wsccl.NT.ca](http://Wsccl.NT.ca))

## **YUKON**

In Yukon, Canada, the **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)** laws and regulations address workplace safety, including regulations related to airborne asbestos.

**Solid Waste Regulations in Yukon** apply to waste products that contain bound asbestos, while the **Special Waste Regulations** apply to unbound asbestos.

**General Provisions for Asbestos Control to protect workers' health require strict handling and safety measures, such as:**

**(1)** A pre-project meeting shall be held between the contractor, the on-site supervisor, and the officer prior to any work commencing on any asbestos control project.

(2) Approval for deviation from these regulations may be granted by the board prior to the work commencing, provided an acceptable alternate level of protection is provided to the workers.

(3) A competent worker, certified in asbestos control procedures, must remain on-site at all times during the work process.

(4) An asbestos control contractor **shall** ensure:

(a) The work area is sealed off from all other areas in the building by use of heavy-duty polyethylene or similar impermeable material;

(b) All openings such as doors, windows, and air vents are sealed with polyethylene, and taped securely in place;

(c) All entrances and exits to the restricted area are controlled by triple-panel polyethylene air locks; (see s.39, diagram 1)

(d) A ventilation unit capable of maintaining a 10% negative air pressure must be installed in the work area with HEPA filters on the exhaust side which is outside the work area.

(5) When unprotected workers are required to be in an area adjacent to a restricted area, continuous instantaneous air sampling **shall** be conducted in the adjacent area by the asbestos control contractor.

(6) When all the asbestos has been removed from the site, the asbestos control contractor **shall** conduct air sampling to ensure a concentration of less than 0.2 fibers per cc has been obtained.

(7) The asbestos control contractor may remove the polyethylene enclosure after a concentration lower than 0.2 fibres per cc has been obtained.

(8) As a final clean-up, an asbestos control contractor **shall** clean all exposed surfaces in the work area by vacuuming, utilizing a vacuum cleaner with a 2-stage HEPA filter.

(9) Prior to the work area being returned to regular use, an officer **shall** conduct air sampling to ensure the level of asbestos contamination is below the acceptable level. (less than 0.2 fibres per cc)

(10) The asbestos control contractor **shall** transport all bagged materials to a pre-arranged sanitary landfill site and ensure it is covered over immediately.

Refer to official government sources such as the **Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board** and the **Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Community Services** in Yukon. These sources will provide comprehensive information on the regulations and requirements related to airborne asbestos in the workplace.

Further details on regulations under the Yukon Occupational Health and Safety Act can be found at: [Yukon.ca](http://Yukon.ca) or [wcb.YK.ca](http://wcb.YK.ca)