

DON'T MESS WITH



ASBESTOS

Builders/Developers/Subcontractors

What is asbestos? When is it dangerous?



Asbestos is a health hazard for you and your workers. It is a mineral fiber that has been used in many building materials. There is no known safe level of

exposure to asbestos. All asbestos should be avoided. If asbestos is left undisturbed, it is not likely to harm you – **so don't mess with it!** When asbestos fibers are inhaled, they can be extremely dangerous. Inhaled asbestos fibers can remain in the lungs for a long time. It can take 15-40 years after exposure to asbestos for cancer or respiratory diseases to develop.

Where is asbestos found? Know what to look for.

Asbestos cannot be detected by sight. Materials must be tested for asbestos by a lab. Asbestos has been added to a variety of products to strengthen them, provide insulation and add fire resistance. You may find many of these products still in use. Some common products where asbestos was used include:

- popcorn/acoustic ceilings
- flooring
- ceiling tiles
- furnaces & air ducts
- insulation inside fuse boxes and old wire insulation
- transite shingles and siding
- pipes, pipe wrap & insulation
- roofing materials

Produced by the County of San Diego

WHEN IN DOUBT, CHECK IT OUT.

Asbestos may still exist in buildings. Find out if the building you are working on has asbestos.

If asbestos must be handled during remodeling, demolition, or construction, the work needs to be done by workers trained in the proper procedures or a certified asbestos removal company. Removal of asbestos can be complex. Workers need to wear protective suits and respirators. A dust mask does not provide adequate protection against asbestos fibers. Asbestos fibers are most dangerous when they are dry and become airborne.

Work areas and building materials should be thoroughly inspected and surveyed before any work begins.

It is your responsibility to know whether there is asbestos in the building you are working on.

Check before you wreck. Don't cut corners.

Asbestos contractors are required to be licensed with the California State Licensing Board and certified by the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Certified asbestos removal companies can be found at www.dir.ca.gov/Databases/doshacru/acrusearch.html or www.cslb.ca.gov/consumers. If you have a question about asbestos waste management, contact the County Department of Environmental Health at 619-338-2222. The County Air Pollution Control District must be notified in writing prior to working on commercial buildings, or residential structures with five or more units, that contain a specified amount of asbestos. The APCD can be reached at 858-586-2600.

If you do not comply with the law, there are significant penalties, including criminal punishment.

Asbestos can be considered a hazardous waste, which must be disposed of properly. Penalties can range from \$10,000 to \$250,000 per day, per violation. Property owners and any person who controls, supervises or performs demolition or renovation activities can be directly liable. Action is usually taken against the property owner and all contractors involved.

For more information on asbestos, visit www.sdasbestos.org or call the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District at 858-586-2707.

Illustrations provided by the California Air Resources Board.