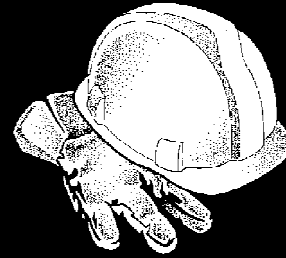



# TRAINING GUIDE

## ASBESTOS



1994

*Before you begin the meeting...*

- Does this topic relate to the work the crew is doing? If not, choose another topic.*
- Has the crew completed basic Hazard Communication training? It will help them understand this topic.*
- Did you read this Training Guide and fill in the blanks where the  appears? (To find the information you need, look over the Safety Walkaround Checklist for this topic.)*

*Begin:* Did you know that just 50 years ago, people called asbestos the “magic mineral”? It’s amazingly strong and fireproof, so it was used in thousands of different products. But now that we know how dangerous asbestos is, the law says you need special training to work with it. You need to learn about respirators, protective clothing, special work methods, and other safety precautions.

We can’t give you all this information in a few minutes. What we **can** do today is make sure everyone is aware of the dangers of asbestos. If an asbestos crew is doing a job near your work area, you need to know what’s going on and how it affects you. It’s also possible that you might run into asbestos on your own job unexpectedly.

*You or a crew member may want to add a personal story about asbestos.*

*Next, discuss with the crew where there may be a danger of asbestos exposure at this particular job site. Explain what testing has been done, and what safety precautions apply.*



### ASK THE CREW THESE QUESTIONS:

*After each question, give the crew time to suggest possible answers. Use the information following each question to add points that no one mentions.*

- 1. Why are so many safety precautions required for asbestos? What’s so dangerous about it?**
  - Asbestos fibers are very small. If you inhale them, they go deep into your lungs. They stay there and can cause disease from 10 to 40 years later.

- Asbestos can cause a lung disease called **asbestosis**, and a rare type of cancer called **mesothelioma**. Only people who are exposed to asbestos get these diseases.
- Asbestos also increases your risk of **lung cancer** and other types of cancer.
- The health risk is increased by **smoking**.

**2. How can asbestos fibers get in the air?**

- Asbestos products can release fibers into the air when they are in poor condition, when they are cut, or when nearby work disturbs them.
- Asbestos products are called **friable** when you can crush them with finger and hand pressure alone. Friable materials are more likely to release fibers into the air.

**3. Sometimes we run into asbestos on a job unexpectedly. What are some materials on construction sites that might contain asbestos?**

- There may be asbestos in roofing felt, roof patch material, vinyl tile, linoleum backing, “transite,” asbestos cement (AC) pipe and sheet, pipe insulation, fireproofing, and spray-on decorative acoustical ceiling material.
- Most new products don’t contain asbestos (although some still do). Asbestos exposure is most likely when renovating or demolishing older structures.

**4. If you think there may be an asbestos hazard, how can you find out for sure?**

- To find out if a material contains asbestos, the company can send samples to a lab for testing. You can’t identify asbestos just by looking at it.
- If necessary, the company can also bring in a qualified professional to measure the asbestos dust level in the air with instruments. This is called **air monitoring**.
- If you suspect that there’s asbestos around, speak up! Ask if anyone has checked it out.

**5. What happens if we *do* discover some asbestos on the job site?**

- We will **stop work** and clear the area.
- A **certified expert** will decide how to handle the situation safely and make sure workers’ exposure is kept as low as possible.
- Only a properly **trained crew** will work with the asbestos.
- The crew will take all required **safety precautions**. For example, they may:
  - Restrict access to the asbestos area and post warning signs.
  - Use respirators (not just dust masks) and full body coverings.
  - Wet down the asbestos to reduce dust.
  - Use power tools that have special exhaust filters.
  - Get regular medical exams.

**6. If you work around asbestos dust, why is it important to change your clothes and wash up *before* you go home?**

- You might bring asbestos fibers home on your clothes or in your car. Your family could breathe them. It’s possible for them to get asbestos-related diseases this way.

*Explain cleanup procedures on this site— how and where to clean up, what to do with contaminated clothing, etc.:*



**7. What about disposal? Suppose you want to get rid of a few items that may contain asbestos, like some old roofing material or a pipe elbow. Can you just throw them in the dumpster?**

- No. All asbestos waste, scrap, and contaminated clothing that might get asbestos dust in the air should be disposed of just like any other hazardous waste. Follow all rules for hazardous waste disposal. For example, put the material in closed containers that are properly labeled.

On this site, we have these procedures for hazardous waste disposal—

*Explain procedures:* \_\_\_\_\_



### **CAL/OSHA REGULATIONS**

*Explain:* Most of the asbestos safety measures we've talked about are required by Cal/OSHA. We have to take these precautions—it's the law. For example, Cal/OSHA says we must make sure no one on the site is exposed to more than **two-tenths of a fiber per cubic centimeter** of air, averaged over an 8-hour shift. This is called the **permissible exposure limit (PEL)** for asbestos. Short-term exposure can be dangerous too. No one may be exposed to more than **1 fiber per cubic centimeter** of air during any 30-minute period. We always try to keep asbestos exposure as low as possible, since no one is sure how much is safe.

I have a Checklist of the Cal/OSHA regulations on asbestos. If you'd like to know more, see me after the meeting.

### **COMPANY RULES**

*(Only if applicable.)* Besides the Cal/OSHA regulations, we have some additional company rules about asbestos.

*Discuss company rules:* \_\_\_\_\_



### **COMMENTS FROM THE CREW**

*Ask:* **Do you have any other concerns about asbestos? Do you see any problems on our job?** *(Let the steward answer first, if there is one.)*

**What about other jobs you've worked on? Have you had any experience with asbestos that might help us work safer on this job?**

## GENERAL SAFETY DISCUSSION

*This is a time to discuss all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during, and after the safety meeting.*

**Are you aware of any hazards from other crews?** *Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.*

**Do we have any old business?** *Discuss past issues/problems. Report progress of investigations and action taken.*

**Any new business? Any accidents/near misses/complaints?** *Discuss accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.*

**Please remember, we want to hear from you about *any* health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.**

*To complete the training session:*

- Circulate Sign-Off Form.*
- Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.*
- Refer action items for follow-up. (Use the sample **Hazard Report Form** in the Reference Section of this binder, or your company's own form.)*

