Safety Talk: Asbestos Awareness

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Asbestos are mineral fibers that were used in many building materials. It is well-known that asbestos is linked to diseases such as asbestosis, lung cancer, mesothelioma, and digestive system cancers.

Asbestos can be found in the following building materials:

- **Thermal system insulation (TSI):**
  - Pipe lagging
  - Pipe wrap
  - Tank insulation
  - Joint mud
- **Surfacing materials**
  - Sprayed-on fireproofing
  - Troweled-on acoustical plaster
- **Miscellaneous materials**
  - Floor tile
  - Mastic
  - Ceiling tile
  - Laboratory benches
  - Transite panels
  - Plaster walls
- **Laboratory testing is the only way to determine if asbestos is present.**
- **Buildings constructed before 1980 are more likely to contain asbestos.**

NEVER DISTURB THESE BUILDING MATERIALS UNLESS YOU ARE CERTAIN THEY DO NOT CONTAIN ASBESTSOS

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has banned the use of asbestos in some, <u>but not all</u>, products.

Building materials such as floor tile can still contain asbestos.

Asbestos is typically primarily a health hazard when it is introduced into the air and inhaled.

Disturbing asbestos-containing materials (ACM) can release asbestos fibers into the air:

- Removing insulation or surfacing materials;
- Sanding or grinding floor tiles;
- Drilling into asbestos-containing plaster;
- Pulling carpet glued onto floor tile; or
- Any demolition-related activity.

ACM can also become disturbed from non-work activities:

- Impact from objects such as doors;
- Water saturation from leaks; and
- Normal wear and tear.

NO UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO EMPLOYEE SHALL DISTURB OR REMOVE ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIAL

Notify Environmental Health and Safety to abate ACM. Report damaged insulation or surfacing material to EHS.

To request abatement, complete the "Asbestos Abatement Request" form found on safety.uchicago.edu.

Health Hazards Associated with Asbestos:

- **Asbestosis and lung cancer are <u>dose-related</u> diseases.**
- **For dose-related diseases: quantity and duration of exposure increase the risk of disease outcome.**
- **Mesothelioma is <u>not</u> dose-related and is only caused by exposure to asbestos.**
- **For non-dose related diseases: risk of disease outcome is unrelated to quantity and duration of exposure.**
- **Smoking and asbestos exposure are known cause a <u>synergistic</u> effect.**
- **The risk for lung cancer in smokers exposed to asbestos is greater than the sum the risks for these two individual risk factors.**

For further information: Please review the Asbestos Policy on the Environmental Health and Safety website.

Asbestos Awareness training is required for all Facilities Services employees.