

Briefing Note

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN ASBESTOS SURVEY?

Asbestos: Low
Threat?
Yes



Introduction

Having an asbestos survey carried out is an effective way to help you manage asbestos in your premises. A survey will provide vital information, such as the location, condition and amount of asbestos that has been identified.

However, instructing an asbestos survey is only the first step to ensuring asbestos compliance and managing asbestos effectively. If asbestos has been identified or presumed during a survey, there is a legal duty to manage these materials as detailed in Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

Upon receipt of the survey report, it is important to act upon any actions that may have been raised, to prioritise these actions, and to communicate the findings to anyone who may come into contact with the asbestos. On-going monitoring of any asbestos containing materials (ACMs) which will remain within the premises will also be required. To ensure these tasks are completed effectively, an Asbestos Management Plan should be created.

Core Requirements:

An asbestos management plan should include the following information:

- **Who is responsible for managing asbestos?** This includes those with direct responsibility, such as the duty holders, but also anyone who is likely to work near asbestos containing materials such as maintenance/repair workers.
- **The asbestos survey report(s).** Your management plan should include details of the surveys completed; there may be more than one if you have refurbishment surveys completed for different parts of the building.
- **A schedule for monitoring the materials' condition.** ACMs must be inspected periodically for signs of deterioration. In most cases, it is recommended that this is carried out at least annually. However, it could be appropriate to adjust the frequency based on various factors including the material type, location and condition. Having asbestos reinspections carried out is an effective method of monitoring the condition of asbestos. This will allow a competent person to assess the condition of a material, provide recommendations based upon any changes, and generate a new asbestos register which can be utilised in the updated asbestos management plan.
- **Telling people about your decisions.** This information should be communicated to anyone who may come into contact with the asbestos, or are responsible for those who may, such as tenants, employees, contractors or visitors. Warning signs/labelling may also be necessary to ensure that anyone who is not captured by the communications plan is made aware of the presence of the asbestos items.
- **Risk assessments.** Routine building maintenance tasks on or near to asbestos containing materials should be risk assessed to ensure those completing the tasks are not at risk from exposure to ACMs.

Important Note: Once your management plan is created, it is important to keep the document up-to-date and review it regularly (at least annually). Asbestos management is an ongoing process. You need to make sure you update the plan whenever ACMs are inspected and/or when work is carried out.

When remedial actions are required and highlighted within a survey report, some common questions we are asked include:

- “Can we just lock the door and prevent anyone from accessing the area?”
- “The area is vacant, do we still need to carry out the remediation works?”

Where an ACM is damaged and presents a significant risk, it is usually recommended that access to the affected area is restricted. This can be achieved by locking access doors leading to the area and to display signage. However, this should only be a temporary measure until the required remediation works are completed. Leaving damaged asbestos material in place, even in a vacant space, will always have the potential to cause exposure. Most vacant or disused spaces are still subject to some form of inspection, regular security checks for example, and building inspections so there are risks of exposure to people. There are also risks associated with unauthorised entry, vagrants and vandals etc, from exposure to asbestos and damage to other ACMs in the property.

If an area is locked off for a considerable amount of time, it is likely the condition of the material(s) will deteriorate further, resulting in increasing risks over time until access is eventually required. The result is higher costs to remedy the situation prior to opening up the area for use.

While ACMs remains on site in poor condition, then the possibility of disturbance and exposure to airborne asbestos fibres should not be overlooked and remediation should be planned for as soon as possible.

Simply restricting access to an area is not a suitable long-term solution.



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