

**Toolbox Talk Details**

Title	B16 - Asbestos
Reason	Around 5,000 people a year, from all industries, die from asbestos-related diseases. Asbestos kills more people in the UK than road accidents. You need to be aware of the hazards of asbestos because it could kill you.
Outline	This talk covers what materials may contain asbestos, where it can be found and what you need to do to protect yourself.

**Where you will find asbestos**

1. In insulation and sprayed coatings used for: boilers, plant and pipework (some are obvious, but some are hidden in underfloor ducting); fire protection to steelwork, often hidden behind false ceilings; and thermal and acoustic insulation of buildings.
2. In insulating board used in fire protection to doors, protected exits and steelwork; claddings on walls and ceilings; internal walls, partitions and suspended ceiling tiles; and fire blankets.
3. Asbestos cement, which is found as: corrugated roofing and cladding sheets of buildings; flat sheets for partitions, cladding and other door facings; and rainwater gutters and downpipes.
4. Other products: some textured coatings and paints; friction materials (such as brake linings and clutch plates); and flashguards and components within equipment.

**How asbestos can affect you**

1. When asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) are disturbed, the fibres are released into the air and can easily be breathed in.
2. The fibres penetrate deep into the lungs where they remain, leading to diseases such as asbestosis (fibrous scarring of the lungs), lung cancer and mesothelioma (cancer of the lining of the lung). Mesothelioma is incurable and is always fatal.
3. Smoking increases the risk of asbestos-related diseases.

**Hazardous work**

1. It is a legal requirement that workers who are likely to disturb asbestos or ACMs receive asbestos awareness training.
2. Anyone involved in building repair, maintenance and refurbishment is particularly at risk – it is estimated that around 20 workers or former workers from the construction sector die each week in the UK as a result of past exposure to asbestos. Many of these are plumbers, electricians and joiners.
3. Prior to any work in buildings built before the year 2000 and that has the potential to disturb ACMs, employers must ensure that a suitable survey is undertaken, and the work is planned to prevent workers from being exposed. This may involve removal or encapsulation of the ACMs, which must always be done by a competent contractor, who will often need to be licensed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
4. Make sure that you are given information regarding the possible presence of ACMs before working in any building built before the year 2000.
5. If you are not sure what a material is, do not disturb it until you have found out. If you think that you have come across an ACM, stop work immediately and tell your supervisor.

Revision Date	Assessed By	Signature
January 2021	Michael Reddan	