

ASBESTOS PROGRAM FOR CONTRACTORS WORKING IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Pennsylvania asbestos program includes federal and state regulations to help protect the public from exposure to hazardous amounts of airborne asbestos. The following is a brief summary of the regulations. Information in this fact sheet does not supersede any federal, state or local requirements.

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a generic term used to describe a variety of natural mineral fibers. From the early 1930s until the 1970s, manufacturers added asbestos to products for strength and to provide heat insulation and fire resistance. Asbestos also resists corrosion and is a poor conductor of electricity. Because few products contained all of these properties, asbestos was widely used in the construction of homes, schools and other buildings.

HOW CAN PEOPLE BE EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS?

Most people are exposed to small amounts of asbestos in their daily lives. However, if materials containing asbestos are disturbed—for example sawed, scraped or sanded into a powder—asbestos fibers are more likely to become airborne and inhaled into the lungs.

HOW IS ASBESTOS REGULATED IN PENNSYLVANIA?

Because asbestos, in certain forms, has been determined to cause serious health problems, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulates the removal, collection, transportation and disposal of asbestos-containing materials (ACM). DEP's Air Quality Program has adopted and enforces the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 40 CFR Part 61 Subpart M, the Asbestos National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) regulations, as amended on November 20, 1990. Should a project be subject to the NESHAP regulations, a minimum 10-day notification of the project is required to be made to both EPA and DEP. The EPA and DEP do not regulate the removal of ACM from private residences unless the residence is an apartment with five or more units.

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) enforces the Pennsylvania Asbestos Occupations Accreditation and Certification Act of 1990 (Act 194 and Act 161), which requires certification for the following asbestos occupations: contractor, inspector, management planner, project designer, supervisor and worker. L&I requires a five-day prior notification for friable asbestos on indoor projects at regulated facilities (including the EPA/DEP exempt private residence when the friable asbestos is disturbed by someone other than the homeowner). Call L&I at 717-772-3396 for more information regarding Act 194 and Act 161.

Contact the municipality where the project is located to find out if there are any local regulations.

WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS IN THE ASBESTOS NESHAP REGULATIONS?

- Friable ACM is material containing more than one percent asbestos that, when dry, can be crumbled, pulverized or reduced to a powder by hand pressure.
- Nonfriable ACM is material containing more than one percent asbestos that, when dry, **cannot** be crumbled, pulverized or reduced to a powder by hand pressure. It is divided into two categories:
 - Category I includes asbestos-containing packings, gaskets, resilient floor coverings or vinyl asbestos floor tile and asphalt roofing products.
 - Category II includes any other asbestos-containing material, except Category I nonfriable ACM, such as transite siding shingles, galbestos, concrete-type piping and other ACM concrete-type products.
- Regulated asbestos-containing materials (RACM) are: (a) friable ACM; (b) Category I nonfriable ACM that has passively become friable by water damage, fire damage or weathering; (c) Category I nonfriable ACM that will be or has been subjected to sanding, grinding, cutting, drilling or abrading; and (d) Category II nonfriable ACM that has a high probability of becoming or has become crumbled, pulverized or reduced to a powder in the course of demolition or renovation operations.
- Demolition – the wrecking or taking out of any load-supporting structural member of a facility together with any related handling operations **or** the intentional burning of any facility.
- Renovation – altering a facility or one or more facility components in any way, including the stripping or removal of RACM from a facility component.
- Facility – any institutional, commercial, public or industrial structure. A single residential building with four or fewer dwelling units is not a regulated facility under the NESHAP regulation unless it is part of an installation, which was previously subject to NESHAP regulations or its main use is not residential.

- Installation – a building or structure or any group of buildings or structures at a single demolition or renovation site that is under the control of the same owner or operator.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW BEFORE REMOVING ASBESTOS IN PENNSYLVANIA?

State regulations stipulate that it is illegal for anyone to engage in any asbestos occupation (worker, supervisor, project designer, inspector, management planner or contractor) without proper certification from L&I. These requirements, along with a five-day notification prior to the start of any abatement or demolition project where ACM is present, are outlined in Acts 194 and 161. Call L&I at 717-772-3396 for more information regarding these requirements.

The building must be thoroughly inspected for ACM prior to any renovation or demolition. If the amount of friable ACM that will be removed is more than 260 linear feet, 160 square feet or 35 cubic feet, the project falls under the federal NESHAP regulations. This requires that a notification be postmarked or hand delivered to DEP and EPA at least **10 WORKING DAYS** prior to the start of the project. **All demolitions of regulated facilities, as defined above, also require a 10-day notification to DEP and EPA, regardless of the presence of asbestos.**

Additional regulations exist for demolition and renovation of any building containing ACM in Philadelphia and Allegheny Counties. In Philadelphia County, call 215-685-7576. In Allegheny County, call 412-578-8133. It is important to contact the appropriate office if the project is located in either of these counties.

WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION?

DEP is transitioning away from paper to online asbestos abatement and demolition/renovation notifications. DEP held a webinar on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 to introduce and explain the new online system. A recording of the webinar can be accessed from the following hyperlink:

- Training Webinar ([MP4](#)) ([WMV](#))

The **Online Asbestos Notification System** (www.dep.pa.gov/asbestos) is one of many applications on the DEP's [GreenPort](#) website. You will need to create a GreenPort account to access the system if you don't already have one. Regardless of how many DEP systems you want to access, only one GreenPort account is ever necessary. Once you create an account, you can self-register for the Online Asbestos Notification System by clicking on the "Enroll" button at the bottom of the screen, selecting "ePermitting," and then "Asbestos." Thereafter, an "ePermitting" button will be available on the right side of your application's screen. Those having problems creating a Greenport account should call the [DEP Service Desk](#) at 717-787-4357.

- [Online Asbestos Notification System User's Guide](#) (PDF)

Note: This online system is not for asbestos abatement and demolition/renovation projects in Philadelphia or Allegheny Counties.

While we strongly encourage the use of the Online Asbestos Notification System, links to the paper notification and its instructions are found at www.dep.pa.gov/asbestos. Please mail paper notifications to the appropriate DEP regional office found in the instructions and not the Rachel Carson State Office Building in Harrisburg. Please contact the appropriate DEP regional office or [Craig Evans](#) by e-mail or by telephone at 717-772-3995 if you have questions or need additional information.

WHERE IS THERE MORE INFORMATION?

To obtain copies of the NESHAP regulations, the notification form or other information, please contact the local DEP regional office:

Southeast Regional Office – 484-250-5920 (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties)

Northeast Regional Office – 570-826-2511 (Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming counties)

South-central Regional Office – 717-705-4702 (Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, and York counties)

North-central Regional Office – 570-321-6580 (Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, and Union counties)

Southwest Regional Office – 412-442-4000 (Allegheny, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Somerset, Washington, and Westmoreland counties)

Northwest Regional Office – 814-332-6940 (Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango, and Warren counties)

For work done in Philadelphia County, contact Air Management Services at 215-685-7576.

For work done in Allegheny County, contact Allegheny County Health Department at 412-578-8133.

For more information, visit www.dep.pa.gov.

UNDERSTANDING ASBESTOS

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a generic term used to describe a variety of natural mineral fibers. From the early 1930s until the 1970s, manufacturers used asbestos to strengthen products and to provide heat insulation and fire resistance. Asbestos also resists corrosion and is a poor conductor of electricity. Because few products contained all of these properties, asbestos was widely used in the construction of homes, schools, and other buildings.

HOW CAN SOMEONE BE EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS?

Most people are exposed to small amounts of asbestos in their daily lives. However, if materials containing asbestos are disturbed—for example sawed, scraped, or sanded into a powder—fibers are more likely to become airborne and inhaled into the lungs. Asbestos fibers are primarily a respiratory health hazard. Fibers that get into water or food also may be ingested, although they usually pass through the digestive system and do not cause a problem.

HOW CAN ASBESTOS AFFECT HUMAN HEALTH?

Studies of people who were exposed to asbestos for a long time in factories and shipyards show that breathing high levels of asbestos fibers can lead to an increased risk of lung cancer; mesothelioma, a rare but fatal form of cancer in the thin membrane lining of the chest and abdominal cavities; and asbestosis, a serious non-cancerous respiratory disease in which asbestos fibers aggravate and scar lung tissue. The risk of these health problems also increases for tobacco smokers.

WHERE IS ASBESTOS FOUND?

Until the 1970s, many types of building products and insulation materials used in homes contained asbestos, although most products made today do not. The only way to get a positive identification of asbestos is to analyze a sample using a special type of microscope.

If asbestos is discovered in the home, it does not pose a serious problem as long as it remains in good condition. Usually, it is best to leave asbestos material alone. Over time, it may become damaged, either from being disturbed or from age, at which point it is more likely to become airborne and a health hazard.

Common products in the home that might contain asbestos include:

- **Insulation around steam pipes, furnaces, and air ducts** – Asbestos fibers may be released when insulation is damaged or removed improperly.
- **Vinyl floor covering** – Vinyl tiles, the backing on vinyl sheet flooring and adhesives (mastic) used for installing floor covering, may become a problem if sanded or scraped during removal.
- **Roof shingles and siding** – These products, if they contain asbestos, are not likely to release asbestos fibers unless sawed or drilled.
- **Soundproofing or decorative material** – If sprayed on walls and ceilings, material that is loose, crumbly, or water-damaged may release fibers. So could material that is sanded, drilled, or scraped.
- Other products that may contain asbestos:
 - ☑ cement sheet, millboard;
 - ☑ door gaskets in furnaces;
 - ☑ patching and joint compounds;
 - ☑ textured paints;
 - ☑ artificial ashes and embers for gas-fired fireplaces;
 - ☑ fireproof gloves, stove-top pads, ironing board covers, and hairdryers; and
 - ☑ automobile brake pads and linings, clutch facings, and gaskets.

HOW DOES PENNSYLVANIA REGULATE ASBESTOS?

Because asbestos in certain forms can cause serious health problems, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulates the removal, collection, transportation, and disposal of asbestos

materials. The DEP Bureau of Air Quality has adopted and enforces the federal asbestos regulations (40 CFR Part 61 Subpart M). DEP does not regulate the removal of asbestos from privately owned homes. However, under the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (PA DL&I) Asbestos Occupations Accreditation and Certification Act (Number 1990-194), friable asbestos material disturbed by someone other than the homeowner may be regulated. Contact the PA DL&I at 717-772-3396 for more information. Contact the local municipality to find out about local regulations.

Pennsylvania requires certifications for the following asbestos occupations: contractor, inspector, management planner, project designer, supervisor, and worker. Call PA DL&I at 717-772-3396 for more information about the Asbestos Occupations Accreditation and Certification Act of 1990 (Acts 194 and 161).

ASBESTOS IN SCHOOLS

All nonprofit private and public school administrators, with children in grades one through 12, are required to inspect their buildings for asbestos, develop a plan for controlling the release of asbestos fibers, and maintain asbestos that is in good condition. Questions should be directed to DEP at 717-787-4325.

ENFORCEMENT/COMPLAINTS

If improper asbestos removal or repair projects are suspected, contact the local regional DEP office listed below.

ATTENTION ASBESTOS CONTRACTORS

Asbestos contractors in Pennsylvania must comply with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Asbestos regulations in 40 CFR Part 61 Subpart M. Questions about these regulations may be referred to any DEP regional air quality program office listed below.

The Pennsylvania Asbestos Accreditation and Certification Act (Act 194 and Act 161) requires contractors to be certified and licensed by PA DL&I to perform renovation projects involving asbestos. For more detailed information about these requirements, call 717-772-3396.

Additional regulations exist for demolition and renovation of any building with asbestos-containing material in Philadelphia and Allegheny counties. In Philadelphia County, call Philadelphia Air Management Services at 215-685-7576. In Allegheny County, call the Allegheny County Health Department at 412-578-7969. It is important to contact these offices if the project is located in either of these two counties.

WHERE IS THERE MORE INFORMATION?

1. Call the DEP Bureau of Air Quality in Harrisburg, 717-787-4325. Online information about asbestos can be found at www.dep.pa.gov.
2. Call the Air Quality program at the local DEP regional office:
 - Southeast (Norristown), 484-250-5920
 - South-central (Harrisburg), 717-705-4702
 - Northwest (Meadville), 814-332-6634
 - Southwest (Pittsburgh), 412-442-5214
 - Northeast (Wilkes-Barre), 570-826-2511
 - North-central (Williamsport), 570-321-6580
3. For Allegheny County, call 412-578-7969 for information and special regulations.
4. For Philadelphia County, call 215-685-7576 for information and special regulations.
5. Contact the local municipality to find out if there are any local regulations.
6. The EPA Asbestos Ombudsman, 800-368-5888, has an asbestos information package available to the public.
7. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 800-638-2772, will send information about asbestos upon request.
8. The PA DL&I, 717-772-3396, has information about certification requirements for the asbestos disciplines.

The American Lung Association, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and EPA provided much of the information included in this fact sheet.

For more information, visit www.dep.pa.gov.