ON LOCATION

ASBESTOS AWARENESS

1.0 PURPOSE

This Asbestos Awareness Sheet is meant to provide information to production employees about asbestos and asbestos containing materials (ACM); the potential health effects associated with serious exposure; and safety procedures that should be followed to reduce exposure.

This information is not intended to make the reader an asbestos expert, nor does it indicate all of the legal requirements when handling, testing, and disposing of ACM material.

Employees should understand:

- That poorly maintained asbestos containing materials showing signs of degradation are potentially hazardous.
- Employees should always check with their Department Head or the Location Manager prior to beginning work on any location built before 1981.
- If there is ACM present at the location to be occupied by the crew a licensed asbestos contractor or safety professional will have surveyed the areas and identified any ACM in a document that should be posted at the entrance of the building.
- Any cuts, or abrasions that have left the ACM material open is a potential source of fibers and the potential for fiber release is high. Any activities such as renovation, construction, demolition, or any penetration into walls or insulated pipes there is the possibility of fiber release.
- When ACM is damaged or deteriorated asbestos abatement must be done by a certified contractor to either remove or stabilize the asbestos containing item. Typically an air sample will be run if airborne asbestos was part of the remediation.
- Asbestos Containing Material in good shape does not pose a hazard unless it is cut, sawn, sanded, or opened.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that is found throughout the world. Prior to 1981 asbestos had several characteristics that made it desirable for many commercial uses.

- The fibers are extremely strong, flexible, and very resistant to heat, chemicals, and corrosion.
- Asbestos was also an excellent insulator, and the fibers were spun, woven, and bonded into other materials, or pressed to form paper products.
- For these reasons and because it is relatively inexpensive, asbestos was widely used for many years and ultimately used in many different commercial products.
**Where is ACM Found?**

Knowing its properties gives you a good idea of some of the products and places you should be alert to when working in a pre-1981 building. When first arriving at location, check with the Location Manager for any Asbestos Survey that the production may have initiated in preparation for your arrival. **It should be posted at the entrance.**

If asbestos was found understand what and where it was, and be cautious of similar building materials when you see them. Keep your eyes open for other materials on jobsites that may be asbestos and may have been missed, such as:

1. **Insulation around pipes, ducts, and furnaces.** Insulation can be in the form of paper, corrugated cardboard-like paper, and powdery material under a cloth covering, within steel fire doors or equipment doors.
2. **Insulation that is part of, or near, electrical equipment.** Fibrous-looking insulation is sometimes packed around lighting fixtures or electrical equipment.
3. **Composition ceiling tiles.** In the past, many major brands of standard ceiling tiles contained asbestos in the form of acoustic board and tile.
4. **Cement Board.** Usually mottled and grey in color, these boards were used extensively in the past where chemical and fire resistance was desirable. Check insulation in boiler room walls and similar applications.
5. **Asbestos was commonly added to plaster.** decorative plaster, and acoustical plaster. Some old types of wall board along with spackle and joint compounds which were made with asbestos until the middle 70's.
6. **Caulking/putties:** Commonly used in old windows panes, window frames, etc.
7. **Floor coverings:** Vinyl & asphalt floor tiles and sheet (similar to linoleum). 9" by 9" tiles are almost always ACM. These tiles do not permit asbestos fibers to escape unless they are broken, sanded, or buffed.
8. **Mastics for tiles, roofing felts, tar paper and caulks.** ACM is usually locked under roofing material, however on old roofs that have become weathered and dry asbestos can be released when disturbed.

**3.0 ASBESTOS EXPOSURE**

Inhalation of asbestos fibers can cause very serious health risks.

- Asbestos is composed of long silky fibers that contain microscopic filaments that when exposed and disturbed will float in the air for several hours.
- Asbestos fibers are dangerous because they can penetrate lung tissue and cause disabling and fatal diseases after prolonged exposure.
- In most cases the fibers are released only if the asbestos containing material (ACM) is disturbed.
Intact and undisturbed asbestos containing materials do not pose a health risk.

1. The mere presence of asbestos does not mean that the health of occupants is endangered. When ACM is properly maintained, release of fibers into the air is prevented, and the risk of asbestos related disease is eliminated.
2. Although exposure to asbestos is potentially hazardous, health risks can be minimized by carefully choosing locations and negating the risk of known asbestos at the location through use of an asbestos professional prior to the arrival of
3. However, asbestos containing materials can become hazardous when the material encapsulating them is damaged, disturbed, or has deteriorated. When exposed fibers can be released a potentially hazardous situation is created.
4. If you or other employees believe they are near damaged ACM you should report your concern to your Department Head. Your Dept. Head shares you concern and will notify the Construction Coordinator or the 1st AD who will call a professional who can recognize and assess the danger. If necessary asbestos abatement contractors will mobilized and can quickly neutralize the hazard.
5. If the location is a building built prior to 1981, then the an environmental survey for asbestos should be done in advance of load in and location preparation.
6. If Department Heads or employees find themselves in a bind or need assistance please call the WBSF Safety Department (818-954-2800) for assistance. The Safety Department will guide the production to professional asbestos workers who will be contacted, will visit the worksite, determine if there is a hazard, and either remove or neutralize the ACM hazard.
7. The ability to recognize the kinds of material that contain asbestos, knowing under what conditions they are dangerous, and understanding basic safety precautions, are all important Factors in keeping exposures to a minimum.

Anonymous Safety Hotline (Toll Free): 877-566-8001
Safety Office: 818-954-2890