1. Look around you. Identify materials on jobsites that may be asbestos:

* **Insulation around pipes, ducts, furnaces.** Insulation can be in the form of paper, corrugated cardboard-like paper, powdery material under a cloth covering, cord and rope (e.g. between metal surfaces around equipment doors and openings), and other forms.

* **Insulation around electrical equipment.** Fibrous-looking insulation is sometimes packed around lighting fixtures or electrical equipment.

* **Composition ceiling tiles.** In the past, many major brands of standard ceiling tiles contained asbestos.

* **Acoustic board and tile.** These used to contain asbestos.

* **Transite™, cement board, and other asbestos boards.** Usually mottled and grey in color, these boards were used extensively in the past. They still are used for insulating boiler room walls and similar applications.

* **Old wall board and plaster.** Asbestos was commonly added to plaster, decorative plaster, acoustical plaster and to a few old types of wall board.

* **Spackle and joint compounds** were made with asbestos until the middle 70's.

* **Caulking/putties** for windows panes, panels, etc.

* **Cement** sometimes was made with asbestos as an ingredient. Test crumbling cement and cast cement water pipes.

* **Siding, clapboard and cement siding tiles for homes and buildings**

* **Floor coverings:** Vinyl & asphalt floor tiles and sheet (similar to linoleum). Old vinyl tiles contained asbestos (especially the 9" by 9" tiles). Some new tiles and sheet flooring also may contain asbestos. They are hazardous when broken, sanded, or buffed.

* **Adhesives and mastics** for tiles, flooring, ceiling tiles, and other construction adhesives.

* **Roofing felts, tar paper and caulks.** Old roofs that have become weathered and dry release asbestos when disturbed.

* **Old paints.** Asbestos fibers were sometimes added to both exterior and interior paints. Asbestos was also used to extend or texture scene paints and glues in the past.

* **Wiring:** both the white fuzzy variety and some wires consisting of plastic/rubber sheathing over fibrous asbestos underneath.
* Old art papier mache products/props: some instant "non-toxic" papier maches contained as much as 80% asbestos powder.
* Current art products: Ceramic clays and glazes may contain asbestos-contaminated talcs. Durham’s Rock Hard Putty made before 2009 also contains this asbestos material.
* Theatrical sources include: Asbestos fire curtains, asbestos cloth for protecting curtains from hot lights, asbestos wiring and insulation in old lighting instruments, etc.
* Old school and business chalkboards were often made of bonded asbestos board.
* Artificial snow (e.g. for Wizard of Oz) was made of asbestos for a time.
* Hot pads, stove and table pads, pads and blocks used under soldering and torch work.
* Diorama or taxidermied animals or forms–as both a plaster material or a fiber stuffing.
* Vinyl wall covering.
* Ductwork fabric connections between sections of ventilation ducts.
* Packings, valves, flanges - plumbing packing thread.
* Fire blankets and welding curtains and tarps.
* Brake shoes on elevators, cars, etc. These can be made with asbestos today.
* Vehicle engine firewalls
* Laboratory hoods and table tops
* Artificial ashes and embers in fake fire place logs
* Fire doors
* Elevator equipment panels
* Vermiculite for texture, potting soil, insulation, etc.
* Crayons (up to ~1990), old pastels, water color paper, old chalks.

2. Get proof that the material is really asbestos.

If you think asbestos is present, call the office. This is not something you want to tackle. It is best to have the sample taken by an industrial hygienist who is qualified to do this and who can sign the proper laboratory chain of custody documents and order the right tests for the materials found.

Bulk samples of bits of the asbestos material or dust can be easily obtained. If floor samples are taken, the union will arrange for a technician to take this sample. Pictures should be taken of the location from which the sample was removed. The samples are put in small Ziploc plastic bags and numbered or labeled with a pen or marker. The sample is taken immediately to a reliable laboratory.
3. **Types of tests.** When the lab data is available, the Safety Officer will explain the types of tests. These include:

* **PLM = polarized light microscopy.** This is cheap (~$25) and perfectly good for identifying most types of asbestos materials. This should be all you need unless the lab says a further test is needed to identify the stuff.

* **Gravimetric analyses.** This is for samples that may be in a matrix that needs to be removed so that the asbestos can be observed. It takes about 6 hours and cost about $100.

* **TEM = transmission electron microscopy.** This takes longer and is needed for especially small fibers and some other problem samples. Can take over night in some labs.

**MEANING OF BULK SAMPLE TESTS:** Anything over 1% asbestos is asbestos and must be treated as such. If bulk samples contain more than 1% asbestos on a job where it is likely to get it airborne, this is sufficient to stop the job and negotiate for proper abatement.

4. **Air Sampling?** Consult with the Union’s Safety Officer if the Producer suggested or plans to do air sampling. There are two types of air sampling.

1. **AREA MONITORING.** This consists of placing a holder with a filter in it attached to a special pump that draws air through at a specified rate. The sampling needs to be done by a "competent person" under the OSHA regs. An industrial hygienist is usually used, but other trained technicians can do it also. The pump should be run through at least half a work day. But shorter sampling can be done on some occasions. Later the filter paper is analyzed for asbestos.

   Area air sampling is not always a good idea. There are many ways to make air-sampling look like there is no airborne asbestos when there is. For examples, the results will be low or negative if the sample is taken when dust is not being raised by people working on site or if the sampler is located in an areas where deposition will not occur.

2. **PERSONAL MONITORING.** In this case the sample is collected by placing the filter holder on a persons lapel and attaching the pump to their belt. This is a good thing to do if it is/ suspected that workers doing specific jobs are being exposed. It is required anytime their is reason to assume that airborne asbestos may be generated by the work.

5. **Air Sampling Results.** A report will be available to all union workers on the location with the sampling results and their meaning for the people working here. If asbestos dust is present, a certified asbestos abatement contractor will be hired to professionally clean up the location and stabilize any friable asbestos materials.

6. **How Much Is Too Much?** A NIOSH-OSHA Asbestos Work Group reviewed asbestos studies and concluded that there is no level of asbestos exposure below which there are no clinical effects. Exposures as brief as one day to three months can bring on significant disease in some people. Asbestos fibers are virtually indestructible and invisible. They can be stirred up on the slightest air currents. They will go through the filters of ordinary household and shop vacuum cleaners. It is crucial to keep them out of places in which we live or work.