

Informational Fact Sheet

Asbestos and Syracuse University

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the generic name given to a group of six naturally occurring mineral fibers. Asbestos fibers are microscopic, but extremely durable and resistant to heat, fire, and most chemicals. Because of these desirable properties, asbestos was used in a wide array of commercial products.



Where was asbestos used?

Beginning in the late 1800's, asbestos was commonly used in North America to strengthen, fireproof, and insulate thousands of different commercial products and building materials. NYS Department of Labor (DOL) provides a list of common asbestos containing materials in its asbestos regulations available on NYS DOL's website: www.labor.ny.gov.

By the 1980's, the United States banned the use of asbestos in most commercial products and building materials manufactured in the U.S. However, products imported from other countries may still contain asbestos.

Why is asbestos a concern?

Asbestos containing materials that are in good condition generally present no hazards. However, an asbestos hazard can exist when such material becomes damaged or disturbed. If asbestos containing materials are disturbed, asbestos fibers can be released into the air and inhaled. The fibers then can get into the lungs and over time can cause scarring and inflammation which can lead to other adverse health effects.

According to the National Cancer Institute's Asbestos Fact Sheet available on their website, "Everyone is exposed to asbestos at some time during their life. Low levels of asbestos are present in the air, water, and soil. However, most people do not become ill from exposure. People who become ill from asbestos are usually those who are exposed on a regular basis, most often in jobs where they work directly with the material."

Is asbestos present in Syracuse University buildings?

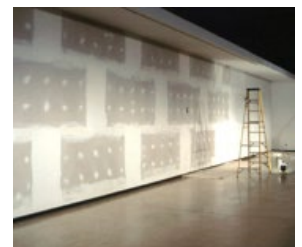
Similar to other buildings built in the U.S. and around the world, Syracuse University has many buildings built or renovated during the time frame when asbestos use in building materials was popular. In general, the University assumes all building materials that could potentially contain asbestos, do contain asbestos until proven otherwise through professional sampling and analysis, regardless of the building's date of construction. Asbestos containing building materials may still be present in many buildings on campus, especially in buildings built prior to 1980.



Asbestos containing building materials can remain indefinitely in buildings as long as it remains in good condition and is not disturbed.

What type of asbestos containing materials are at SU?

Many types of building materials can contain asbestos. Some of the more common asbestos containing building materials found at the University are floor tiles, mastics, adhesives, pipe and boiler insulation, joint compound, window caulks and glazes, sprayed on insulation, and acoustical plaster. Asbestos has also been found in ceiling tiles, drywall, masonry paint, and other types of building materials at the University.



Syracuse University Facilities Services maintains asbestos sampling records for building materials that have been sampled at the University and coordinates the removal of asbestos containing materials prior to building renovations.

Are there regulations related to asbestos in building materials?

There are very strict federal and New York State regulations pertaining to asbestos.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the NYS Department of Labor (DOL) all have implemented asbestos regulations to protect asbestos workers and building occupants from being exposed to asbestos. These regulations specify stringent work practices that must be followed whenever asbestos containing materials are disturbed. They also provide guidance on safe asbestos exposure levels.



How is the University managing the asbestos removal?

The University has a very conservative approach to managing asbestos that meets, and in many cases, exceeds regulatory requirements. During building renovation projects, it is standard practice that all building materials containing asbestos in the renovation area are removed.

Whenever an asbestos containing material is disturbed or removed (i.e., abated) at the University it is done so following the very stringent work practices prescribed in NYS DOL's asbestos regulations found in Part 56 of Title 12 of NYS' Codes, Rules and Regulations. Asbestos is only handled by highly trained and NYS DOL certified asbestos workers. These workers may be University employees who are trained and licensed to conduct asbestos abatement or employees of a contracted licensed asbestos services provider.

What steps are taken during asbestos removal to protect building occupants?

As prescribed in NYS's asbestos regulations, prior to the removal of asbestos, the area will be isolated from other areas in the building by enclosing the area using temporary walls and plastic sheeting. The work area will be clearly marked with asbestos warning signs and notices will be posted on all exterior doors to the building to notify building occupants of the asbestos removal work.

High efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtered exhaust air units will be installed in the asbestos work area to establish a negative pressure in the work area in relation to perimeter spaces and create an inward airflow into the

work area. The asbestos work area enclosure and the exhaust air system will be inspected daily by the asbestos workers even on weekends and days when asbestos work is not occurring. An independent environmental contractor will perform daily air sampling outside of the asbestos work area (when required by NYS DOL) to verify air quality is maintained.

Inside the asbestos work area, the asbestos will be removed according to NYS removal requirements by NYS certified asbestos workers wearing protective suits and air purifying respirators. The asbestos will be kept wet to minimize fiber release and will be placed into thick plastic bags for disposal. The waste will be placed into a second plastic bag prior to being removed from the work area and transferred to a container for eventual disposal at a NYS approved landfill.



What happens when the asbestos work is completed?

Once the asbestos removal is completed, a NYS certified Asbestos Project Monitor or Supervisor will perform a visual inspection of the asbestos work area to verify that all the asbestos

was removed and the clean-up was completed. Air clearance samples will be collected inside the work area as required by NYS. If the work area passes the visual inspection and the air clearance samples meet NYS acceptable levels, the work area will be reopened for unrestricted access.

Should I be concerned about asbestos in the University buildings I work, study, and live in?

Asbestos containing materials in good condition do not present a hazard. Syracuse University's asbestos management practices comply with and exceed what is required by asbestos regulations. The University's primary focus on managing asbestos in buildings is the health of building occupants.

Where can I find additional information?

The University takes a very conservative and proactive approach to managing asbestos in its buildings. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Syracuse University Environmental Health and Safety Services (EHSS) at 315.443.4132.



Syracuse University is committed to making the University a safe place to live, learn, and work.