

INSTRUCTION 28

ASBESTOS

References:

- A. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- B. Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) (as amended)
- C. Property Services Asbestos Policy (as amended)
- D. Construction (Design and Management) (CDM) Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

28.1 This Policy has been designed to be read in conjunction with the asbestos policy held by property services and the the Control of Asbestos Regulations, which requires employers to manage the risks to health arising from asbestos on their premises.

28.2 Many Council buildings will have asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in the building fabric, as they were in common use until the mid-1980s. Where these materials are in good condition and remain undisturbed they do not present a risk to health. When asbestos is disturbed or damaged, fibres may become airborne and can be inhaled. This can happen when work is carried out on or near ACMs, especially if they are broken, sawn, drilled, or sanded, or are in a poor state of repair.

28.3 Because of their excellent heat resistance, chemical inertness, and mechanical strength asbestos products were once widely used in the building industry. For instance, within Council owned property, asbestos has been found in:

- Thermal insulation - on pipes and boilers;
- Insulation boards - for fire protection, as thermal and acoustic insulation on walls, ceilings and structural steelwork;
- Sprayed coatings - for fire protection on structural steelwork;
- Ropes and yarns - as a sealing material or for filling gaps;
- Asbestos cement - in wall claddings, partitions, roofing, or guttering.

Responsibilities**Property Services**

28.4 The Head of Operations is responsible for managing asbestos in the fabric of buildings by:

- Ensuring records of asbestos in the fabric of Council buildings are maintained and this is available on the intranet pages;
- The record (the asbestos register) is the result of a survey carried out by a licensed asbestos contractor and includes an assessment of the condition of the materials;
- The survey results are updated at least annually and amended whenever asbestos is newly discovered, or when it is repaired or removed;
- Ensuring appropriate warning labels are attached to ACMs to identify the hazard, there may be circumstances where labelling is considered inappropriate, but the agreement of the building manager, property services and the health and safety manager should be sought in such cases;

- Planning for repairs, refurbishments, and maintenance should include consideration of the possibility of disturbing previously undiscovered asbestos during the course of the work. In some cases, an asbestos survey will need to be carried out as part of the planning process, especially where any demolition work is contemplated;
- Ensuring safe removal or encapsulation of asbestos;
- Ensuring asbestos waste is disposed of correctly;
- Ensuring relevant employees and contractors have the relevant training.

Building Managers

28.5 Building managers are responsible for:

Ensuring they are aware of the location of known ACMs in their buildings (the asbestos register is available on the intranet at <http://sharepoint/Asbestos>).

- Ensure that staff and contractors are aware of the presence of asbestos, so that those intending to work near it can take proper precautions to avoid accidental damage or disturbance;
- Planning for repairs, refurbishments, and maintenance should include consideration of the possibility of disturbing previously undiscovered asbestos during the course of the work. In some cases, an asbestos survey will need to be carried out as part of the planning process, especially where any demolition work is contemplated;
- Notifying Property Services where they suspect asbestos containing materials have been found and the health and safety manager should be consulted if there is doubt over identification;
- Checking for damage to, or deterioration of, asbestos within the building is reported without delay so that remedial action can be taken;
- Ensuring contractors abide by this policy.

Contractors

28.6 Prior to starting work all contractors must:

- Report to the building manger prior to the start of work;
- Check the Councils' asbestos register;
- Check for asbestos labels within the immediate area of work;
- Check for asbestos hidden in ducts and behind panels;
- React to the procedure below if asbestos is disturbed or suspected.

Immediate action on finding hidden ACMs or accidental damage to ACMs

28.7 If, despite taking every precaution, ACMs are discovered during the course of work, or known ACMs are damaged, the following actions must be taken:

- Stop work immediately;
- Prevent anyone entering the area;
- Avoid spreading asbestos fibres, any clothing contaminated with dust or debris should be removed and placed in a plastic bag;
- Report the problem as soon as possible to the person in charge of the project, Property Services and the health and safety manager.