

Asbestos Awareness

Handout

Overview

Asbestos was once a very widely used, mineral-based building material. Asbestos is found in building materials such as shingles, floor tiles, cement pipes, roofing felts, insulation, ceiling tiles, fire-resistant drywall, and acoustical products.

How can it hurt me?

Asbestos enters the body when you breathe in the fibers, or when fibers are inhaled while smoking. Asbestos can also be ingested by eating food in areas containing asbestos fibers. Once asbestos has embedded itself into your body, it cannot be removed. Symptoms of asbestos exposure include the following:

- **Acute (short term):** Shortness of breath, chest or abdominal pain, or irritation of the skin and mucous membranes.
- **Chronic (long term):** Breathing difficulty, dry cough, broadening and thickening of the ends of the fingers, bluish discoloration of the skin and mucous membranes, asbestosis, lung cancer and/or mesothelioma.

Smoking is known to make asbestos-related symptoms worse.

What must I do?

You are required to:

- follow company rules when working in asbestos exposure areas.
- use any personal protective equipment which the company offers.
- follow all rules regarding hygiene before taking breaks or after your work shift.
- follow all company rules on where to change clothes before and after work.
- know what to do with PPE following completion of the job or work shift.
- understand how to clean, test, use, and maintain your PPE.

