

## Asbestos in Buildings - Code of Practice 3.15

Distribution: Directorate Management Teams, Nominated Departmental Asbestos Coordinators, Site Asbestos Monitoring Officers, Trade Union Representatives.

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### Introduction

Asbestos is the collective name given to a group of fibrous materials that are flexible, mechanically strong and resistant to stretching, heat and chemicals. It has been used in various building products.

Asbestos containing products and materials can produce minute fibrous dust particles which are invisible to the naked eye. It is only when these fibres become airborne, due to damage, deterioration, disturbance, and are then inhaled that there is a risk to health. If asbestos is maintained in good condition and is not disturbed it **does not** pose a health risk.

Common materials that contain asbestos:

- ‘Asbestos cement’ is mainly a mixture of chrysotile and cement, which is moulded and compressed to produce a range of asbestos products such as profiled roofing sheets and sidings, flat sheet, gutters, drainpipes, pressure pipes and flues.
- ‘Textured decorative coating’ is thin decorative and textured finishes such as paints and ceiling plasters used to produce visual effects. These are commonly known as “artex”. This is very low risk.
- ‘Asbestos insulating board’ (AIB) means any flat sheet, tile or building board consisting of a mixture of asbestos and other material. AIB is a lightly compressed board made from asbestos fibre and hydrated Portland cement or calcium silicate with other filler materials.
- The term ‘asbestos insulation’ describes asbestos-containing products, which were used for heat, sound, fire protection and other insulation purposes. This includes preformed sections of pipe insulation, asbestos lagging and asbestos infill

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(asbestos used to fill the spaces between voids, applied between floors and packed around cables where they pass between floors). Millboards are also included in this definition. They have been used for insulation of electrical equipment and for thermal insulation.

- 'Asbestos coating' means a surface coating which contains asbestos for fire protection purposes or as both heat and sound insulation. Most of these coatings were applied by spray but some were applied by hand.

## Duty to Manage Asbestos

As the city council are owners and occupiers of non-domestic premises and have maintenance and repair responsibilities for those premises, there is a duty to assess them for the presence of asbestos and the condition of that asbestos.

This duty is undertaken by Property Services section in Development and Regeneration on behalf of Sunderland City Council. Where asbestos is present Property Services must ensure that the risk from the asbestos is assessed, that a written plan identifying where that asbestos is located is prepared and that measures to manage the risk from the asbestos are set out in that plan and are implemented.

All project managers, across the Council commissioning construction and maintenance work also have duties in respect to asbestos. When they are commissioning work, they must consider asbestos and make sure work is planned in line with regulations. These duties are outlined in the Duties of Project Managers below.

All other Council Directorates have responsibilities under the duty to manage asbestos regarding co-operating with property services and project managers. This includes identifying staff to undertake key duties. These duties are described in the Duties of All Council Directorates section below.

Other council staff especially premises occupiers have a legal duty to cooperate with Property Services and Project Managers to ensure this duty is met.

## Duties of Property Services

Property Services will:

- Develop and maintain the Asbestos Management Plan on behalf of Sunderland City Council.
- Maintain a premises database that holds records for every property within the Council property portfolio.
- Produce and maintain an Asbestos Register for each of the properties.
- Maintain a central copy of every Asbestos Register on the database.
- Issue an Asbestos Register to all premises on the database.

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- Liaise with the premises occupiers to produce a Priority Risk Assessment. This will then rank the asbestos risks for each premises.
- Ensure the Asbestos Analyst completes a material risk assessment.
- Notify the Directorate Asbestos Coordinator of any asbestos projects / work which have an impact on any premises they are responsible for.
- Arrange a periodic inspection of all premises detailed in the database. This periodic inspection is to assess the ongoing condition of the ACM, to inspect and up date the Premises Asbestos Register. Any missing or incomplete documents will be corrected and immediate training to SAMO provided.
- Maintain and manage the database of all asbestos related work.
- Provide on going advice to the authority on asbestos issues.
- Provide support and training to Nominated Departmental Asbestos Coordinators.
- Provide support and training to Site Asbestos Monitoring Officers (SAMO).
- Provide support and training to technical staff such as surveyors, architects, quantity surveyors and other council officers if risk assessment identifies such a need.
- Assit in the identification of suitable asbestos awareness training courses and providers to authority employees whose work could foresee ably expose them to asbestos. such as:
  - general maintenance staff;
  - electricians;
  - plumbers;
  - gas fitters;
  - painters and decorators;
  - joiners;
  - plasterers;
  - general construction workers
  - heating and ventilation engineers;
  - telecommunications engineers;
  - fire and burglar alarm installers;
  - computer cabling installers;
- Report relevant information to the Construction (Health and Safety) Working Group.

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## Duties of All Project Managers

Project managers commissioning work on Council property will:-

- Notify the Asbestos Manager of intended works and if necessary seek advice on action to be taken
- Consult with buildings asbestos register
- Attend relevant training as identified by the Council Asbestos Manager
- Project manage all asbestos related works. This includes liaising with contractors to be satisfied of their competence to undertake asbestos work, agree plans of work, risk assessments, method statements, and any other information relevant to safe working practices such as other significant non-asbestos hazards like working at heights or in confined spaces; The Asbestos Manager will support the project manager to achieve this.
- Ensure a certificate of reoccupation is issued by a suitable competent person, if deemed necessary by the Asbestos Manager, following internal asbestos related works on authority premises. This should follow the 4 key stages of clearance.
- On completion of work provide updated information to the Asbestos Manager to ensure registers are updated.

## Duties of All Council Directorates

All Directorate Chief Officers must ensure an Asbestos Coordinator is nominated to liaise between Land and Property, Project Managers and the Directorate premises.

Asbestos Coordinators must:

- Ensure all premises within their directorate identify a Site Asbestos Monitoring Officer (SAMO)
- Arrange for the referral to the Occupational Health Unit of any employee who may have been exposed to asbestos or cause undue concern or stress regarding their health.
- Ensure building managers / premises managers/ samos are aware any works which has not been arranged through Property Services should be notified to the Asbestos Officer on form 4 of the register (21 days prior to work starting) so the potential for any asbestos disturbance can be assessed.

Asbestos Coordinator for Children Services must ensure the ED1 procedure is known, understood and followed by all schools especially when work involves asbestos.

A SAMO must accept the role and agree to undertake the tasks required. Tasks of SAMO are:

- Undergo asbestos induction training delivered by Property Services.

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- Be responsible for the holding of the Premises Asbestos Register.
- Any works which has not been arranged through Property Services should be notified to the Asbestos Officer on form 3 of the register (21 days prior to work starting) so the potential for any asbestos disturbance can be assessed.
- Ensure any contractor intending to work on the premises is made aware of the contents of the Premises Asbestos Register and signs the register to acknowledge this.
- Ensure the poster making contractors aware of the Asbestos Register is clearly displayed at the entrance / reception of their premises.
- Undertake periodic checks on the condition of asbestos containing materials present on their premises as described in SAMO training. The findings of the checks must be sent to the Land and Property Asbestos Officer to be recorded on the Premises Asbestos Register.
- Report any asbestos related issues, including unplanned exposure or damage to asbestos to Property Services Asbestos Manager as soon as practicable. Following release of asbestos building management must prevent access to the area and prevent further spread of asbestos by switching off air conditioning or hot air heating systems.
- In the event of a fire (or drill) the asbestos register must be taken outside to show the emergency services.

### **Further Information and Advice**

For information, support and advice on a specific asbestos issue contact Property Services Asbestos Manager on Telephone 0191 5612686.

For information, support and advice on health issues in relation to asbestos contact the Occupational Health Unit on Telephone 0191 5532970.

General advice on asbestos issues is available from the Corporate Health and Safety Team, Office of The Chief Executive, Telephone 0191 5611738

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## Information for Employees - Premises where Asbestos Containing Materials Exist

Asbestos is made up of fibrous materials, which are flexible, mechanically strong and resistant to stretching, heat and chemicals. As a consequence asbestos has been used extensively in buildings. Examples of asbestos containing materials found in buildings include exterior asbestos cement cladding; gutters and pipes; fireproof sprays on structural steel joists; insulation boards in service ducts and wall partitions; ceiling and floor tiles and pipe and boiler lagging.

Asbestos containing products can produce very small fibrous dust particles, which cannot be seen by the naked eye. It is only when these fibres become airborne, due to damage, deterioration, disturbance etc, that there is a risk to health. **If asbestos is maintained in a good condition and is not disturbed or damaged it does not pose a health risk.**

The Council has a management system for ensuring that you are not exposed to asbestos containing materials that are in a poor condition and may pose a health risk. This system is based on sound principals laid down by legislation and associated codes of practice and guidance. It is not appropriate simply to remove all asbestos containing materials in buildings. Asbestos materials that are sound, undamaged and not releasing dust should be left alone.

Within the building you occupy your department has nominated a site asbestos monitoring officer (SAMO). This individual is responsible for inspecting the asbestos containing materials to ensure they are not in a dangerous condition. Should you have any concerns about suspect materials within your premises you should contact the SAMO.

Where asbestos containing materials have been identified in your premises you **MUST NOT** disturb them in any way. **DO NOT** put pins in it or stick anything to the surface of such material, as the sealed asbestos fibres may be released.

Should you have any queries that cannot be addressed by your SAMO please contact the Departmental Asbestos Co-ordinators, Property Services Asbestos Manager or the Central Health and Safety Section as below:

**Departmental Asbestos Co-ordinator:**

**Contact Telephone Number:**

**Site Asbestos Monitoring Officer for this premise:**

**EXT. /Location:**

**Central Health and Safety Section - Based in Civic Centre**

**Contact Telephone Number: 0191 5611738**

**Property Services Asbestos Manager, Alison Harvey- Based at 50 Fawcett Street**

**Contact Telephone Number: 0191 5612686**