

KSU Facilities Safety Bulletin

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Asbestos Hazard Awareness

Protect your high-risk workforce from this notorious airborne health hazard. Asbestos is a natural, fibrous silicate mineral. Exposure has proved extremely dangerous; microscopic asbestos fibers, when inhaled, can cause certain types of often fatal lung disease, making asbestos hazard awareness an essential training topic.

Because asbestos was used in countless construction products before 1980, many buildings built before that year are considered to have incorporated asbestos materials (any material containing more than 1% asbestos) over the course of construction.

Today, industrial activity involving salvage, demolition, and construction, commonly present exposure risks to workers. But, even work like performing brake and clutch repairs or building maintenance and cleaning, can present exposure risks—it really depends on what you're working with and where.

Health Risks of Asbestos Exposure

Airborne asbestos represents a health risk because the unseen fibers can be inhaled unknowingly. The asbestos fibers breathed in by workers can cause serious diseases of the lungs and other organs that may not appear until years after the exposure has occurred. Fibers behave like any other type of airborne particle and settle out of the air just like dust or soot. In many instances, particularly in the past, the collection of fibers on the clothing of high-risk workers was a serious problem; these fibers would be carried out of the work area or off-the-job and into homes where others would be exposed.

January HSI/Vivid Course

Operations and Custodial:

Asbestos Hazard Awareness

(Unless Asbestos or O&M Worker trained)

Login with your KSU eid and Password:

<https://otis.osmanager4.com/KSU>

Diseases such as asbestosis, mesothelioma, and lung cancer can all result from chronic exposure to airborne asbestos. Asbestosis is a disease that causes buildup of scar-like tissue in the lungs and results in loss of function that often progresses to disability and death. Mesothelioma is cancer of the chest cavity lining; this condition is rare, but it is almost always fatal because it spreads so rapidly.

The presence of asbestos in the built environment does not always create a hazard, as long as it can be contained. Controlling for recognized asbestos problem areas typically involves applying a coating to the outside surface of the concerning area, to prevent the asbestos fibers from becoming airborne.

If you remember one basic precaution after reading this, it should be that you are never to disturb or break the surface of the asbestos material when it is discovered. The strategy is to leave it alone, then mitigate as quickly as possible by stabilizing the material. OSHA requires the use of signs to mark areas where asbestos may be disturbed, and labels must be used to identify asbestos-containing materials.

If your team performs work in settings where they are likely to encounter asbestos, then you must get them additional asbestos hazard awareness training, coordinate annual medical exams, and provide them with the proper protective equipment.

Source: [hsi.com](https://www.hsi.com)