

Overview

Asbestos, meaning “inextinguishable” in Greek, is the fibrous form of crocidolite, amosite, chrysotile, anthophyllite, tremolite or a mixture containing any of these materials. Asbestos was commonly used for insulating



buildings and homes against cold weather and noise, and due to its heat and fire resistant characteristics, it was also a popular fireproofing material used in the early 1900s. In most commercial forms, asbestos looks like attic insulation, a ball of thick fuzz. The construction industry have, and some continue, to use asbestos in products such as cement and plaster, industrial furnaces and heating systems, building insulation, floor and ceiling tiles, house

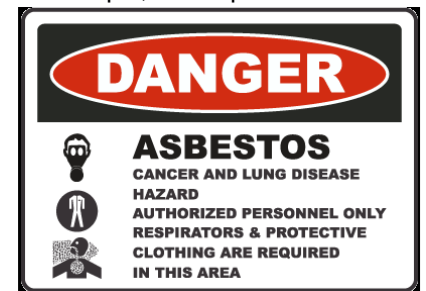
siding, car and truck brake pads and vehicle transmission components, such as clutches. If you work in a building built before 1990, it's likely that some parts of it will contain asbestos.

Exposure

Inhaling asbestos fibres can cause cancer and other diseases, including, Asbestosis, which refers to scarring and stiffening of the lungs caused by inhaling asbestos dust over many years. Asbestosis makes breathing difficult and may lead to fatal diseases such as pneumonia and heart disease. Exposure can also cause lung cancer and mesothelioma, a cancer of the linings of the lungs and abdomen. Asbestos-related diseases and symptoms generally take 20 to 30 years to develop from the time of initial exposure and smokers are at an in-creased risk of developing them.

Hazards

Because asbestos is often mixed with other materials, it's difficult to know if you are working with this hazardous material. Because the individual asbestos fibres that are released into the air are microscopic, it is important to avoid disturbing asbestos and to be trained to work with this hazardous material safely. Renovating or demolishing houses containing asbestos products can release asbestos fibres, which are extremely fine and can stay airborne for hours. Inhaling asbestos fibres may cause serious health problems, including lung disease and cancer.



There are no significant health risks if materials containing asbestos are:

- Sealed behind walls and floorboards
- Isolated in an attic
- Left undisturbed

If you think you have encountered asbestos:

- Shut down the work area immediately and report your findings to your supervisor
- Avoid breathing in the dust
- Ensure an investigation is conducted

Legislation

Refer to Part 23 of the Saskatchewan *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020* for detailed legal safety requirements and procedures for when exposed to or handling asbestos.

SCSA Guide to OHS Legislation App



Tool Box Talk

When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks.

Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf

About the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.