

# Asbestos Questions

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**Do new building or industrial materials contain asbestos? Is it still legal for products to contain asbestos? What products and older building products contain asbestos?**

Most new materials will not contain asbestos as the federal government has implemented a ban on importing asbestos containing materials, however there are some exceptions for certain industries. For more information visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/10/the-government-of-canada-takes-measures-to-ban-asbestos-and-asbestos-containing-products.html> If

there is any doubt, your best option is to have the material tested.

**How does one get diagnosed with Asbestos-related diseases? With asbestos exposures, lifestyle choices like smoking have an impact on whether cancer develops. Is there any new information on this?**

A diagnosis of asbestos related disease would come from a medical professional and is based on a number of factors and tests.

**Where can one find regulations about controlling worker exposure to asbestos? Are current asbestos control regulations effective in preventing exposures and deaths?**

The requirements for controlling exposure to asbestos can be found in *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996 (Part XXIII)*. More information on controlling worker exposure can be found in the Saskatchewan Asbestos Abatement Manual and on saskatchewan.ca website [here](#).

**In a construction project, who is legally responsible for controlling presence of asbestos (owner, contractor, worker, etc.)?**

Everyone one is responsible for safety. As the employer has the most control over the site, they bear the most responsibility, this would take the form of training, providing personal protective equipment and identifying which materials are asbestos containing. Workers should always ask questions if they are unsure about a material or find new materials that have not been assessed. They should also ensure they receive the appropriate training as well as wear personal protective equipment as required.

**How does one get a building tested for asbestos? Is there a rule of thumb for understanding where asbestos may be present?**

The only way to determine if asbestos is present is to have a sample analyzed and tested by a qualified laboratory. More information on finding a qualified laboratory can be found on the WorkSafe Saskatchewan website here:

[http://www.worksafesask.ca/asbestos/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1594150413.5545260906219482421875](http://www.worksafesask.ca/asbestos/?doing_wp_cron=1594150413.5545260906219482421875)

**Is getting rid of asbestos best practice and is encapsulation still considered a good practice? Are there best practices in other provinces around asbestos that Saskatchewan should adopt?**

Best practice is highly dependent on the specifics of the installation. In general, abatement may be preferred as it will eliminate the hazard, however there may be situations where encapsulation is preferred due to a number of factors. It is recommended that you speak to a qualified asbestos consultant to determine the best path for each individual project.

**How does one reduce exposure to Asbestos on construction projects?**

Identification of asbestos containing materials is key. Once the asbestos has been identified, then following the requirements in *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* and the Saskatchewan Asbestos Abatement Manual is required to reduce exposure to workers.

**Are the current measures for controlling asbestos exposures effective and what will the effects be if no additional control measures are taken?**

Without appropriate controls, asbestos exposure can lead to serious health effects such as lung cancer, asbestosis and mesothelioma. The controls outlined in *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* and the Saskatchewan Asbestos Abatement Manual help to reduce the risk of exposure.

**Which groups in construction should be targeted with a prevention strategy for asbestos exposure?**

All individuals involved in construction need to be aware of the appropriate process for handling asbestos and the potential harms associated with the material. Asbestos is present in many building materials that most workers in the construction industry are exposed to. Primarily, the workers that deal with buildings built prior to the 1990's are most at risk.

## **What controls are most effective in preventing asbestos exposures?**

Elimination of the hazard is the most effective control. Individuals can refer to the Saskatchewan Asbestos Abatement Manual.

## **What data and information does industry need to make informed decisions about asbestos exposure? What is the current state of data and research into asbestos?**

The risks of asbestos are well understood and are informed by scientific, health and other data. The most important information required to make informed decisions is to determine if there are asbestos containing materials in the workplace. Testing materials is of paramount importance. Testing of suspect asbestos containing materials through a building survey should be completed by a competent person prior to renovations and demolition.