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High Risk Strategies and Industry Initiatives

Asbestos Initiative: Commercial Properties

Asbestos-related lung diseases are preventable, yet asbestos remains the leading cause of work-related deaths in British Columbia. As part of on-going efforts to address this problem, WorkSafeBC will continue with an enforcement initiative aimed at reducing exposure to asbestos during cleaning, maintenance, repair, and renovation work in commercial buildings.

Our goals

Our focus

What you can do

People who work in proximity to asbestos-containing materials in commercial buildings — such as professional buildings, office buildings, and shopping centres — may face a risk of exposure when their activities disturb materials such as drywall, flooring, ceilings, block walls containing vermiculite, or insulation materials.

Our goals

The goals of the 2021–2023 Asbestos Initiative: Commercial Properties are to:

- Ensure commercial property owners, their agents, property management employers, and prime contractors understand their obligations and duties under the *Workers Compensation Act* and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation with respect to asbestos management in their commercial buildings
- Ensure effective asbestos management plans (including for employees, contractors, and tenants) are implemented that consider the potential for worker exposure to asbestos
- Assess and develop knowledge of workplace parties concerning the hazards of asbestos exposure
- Ensure workers are familiar with and follow exposure control plans, including reporting of any unsafe conditions

Our focus

- Engage directly with commercial property owners and building management employers to establish asbestos management plans, which will in turn affect contractors and workers who perform cleaning, maintenance, repair, and renovation work on these buildings
- Focus on the identification, assessment, and control of asbestos in commercial buildings
- Assess the effectiveness of asbestos hazard communication, reporting of hazards, and the coordination of asbestos-related work activities
- Inform commercial property owners and management employers of the results of this risk-based project

What you can do

Our Asbestos (</en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/asbestos>) pages provide resources and information on how to understand and address some of the health and safety issues to focus on in your industry.

See also

- Occupational cancer (</en/health-safety/injuries-diseases/occupational-cancer>)