

Introduction

This policy sets out our commitment and approach to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that residents, contractors and staff are not exposed to risks to their health from asbestos materials, including offices and other buildings

Vision

To positively and proactively support avoid exposure to asbestos while minimising the risk of asbestos being disturbed during maintenance and building work in properties while managing the risk of asbestos materials in communal areas and ensuring that work to remove asbestos is carried out in accordance with best practice

What is asbestos?

Asbestos materials were used in construction throughout the twentieth century, particularly from the 1950s to the 1980s. No asbestos has been permitted in UK building since 1999. Asbestos fibres can be very harmful to health if they are released into the air and people breathe them in. There is no safe exposure level known for asbestos and once asbestos related diseases occur there is no known cure. There are three main types of serious health risks associated with exposure to asbestos fibres:

Asbestosis - chronic obstructive lung disease

Lung cancer - a fatal lung disease

Mesothelioma - a fatal cancer of the outer lining of the lung specific to asbestos exposure.

ASBESTOS POLICY (HINDS BUILDING SERVICES)

Legislation

This policy is based on the following legislation and shall be amended in line with any changes (in some cases, we have identified our specific responsibilities):

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2006 (under this regulation, we must take reasonable steps to find asbestos containing materials in premises and check their condition; presume that materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence to suppose that they do not; keep up to date written records of the location and condition of asbestos containing materials; assess risk of exposure to asbestos containing materials and prepare and implement a plan to manage the risk)

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as Amended)

The Construction Design and Management Regulations 2007

The Asbestos Licensing (Amendment) Regulations 1998 (under this regulation, we should ensure that any party carrying out work with asbestos insulation, asbestos coating or asbestos insulating board is a holder of a licence granted by the Health and Safety Executive. Two of the exceptions to this are works for a short duration where the exposure is no more than one hour for a maximum of two hours per week)

The Asbestos Prohibitions Regulations (we undertake to not supply or use asbestos or asbestos containing products in any of its forms)

Procedures for Dealing with Suspicious Materials and establishing a Safe System of Work

Stop any work, remove and keep all persons out of the area. Where practicable, close or seal or lock off the area. Do not remove any equipment or material. Where appropriate, follow decontamination procedure (which may include the removal of clothes or PPE where asbestos fibres may have fallen). The quarantine of the area should continue until such time as the material has been analysed to establish the nature and appropriate remedial action is taken.

Inform the senior person on site. Inform the Team Leader or Site Supervisor (as is appropriate) who will report the discovery to the Main Contractor (where relevant). For residential sites, inform the Team Leader immediately

Prepare and display a potential Asbestos hazard keep out sign to prevent persons from gaining access to the area.

Do not return to the task unless you have been given the all clear and are instructed to do so.

Responding to Incidents

In the event of any incident where asbestos is or may have been disturbed, the Team Leader on site must be informed in all cases. They will in turn notify the Health and Safety Officer who will arrange for asbestos consultants to be contacted to visit the site and assess levels of contamination.

In cases where the premises are currently occupied, the relevant housing manager or resident should be consulted and an agreement for housing and/or other support is to be provided.

Managing Asbestos Work

The following approach is to be applied: first, a management survey should be undertaken. The purpose of this is to perform an initial check to locate, as far as reasonably practicable, the extent of any suspected asbestos containing materials in the building which could be damaged or disturbed during normal occupancy, including foreseeable maintenance and installation. This may involve minor intrusive work but will be dependent on what is reasonably practicable for the specific property. Second, in cases of refurbishment and demolition, a survey should be carried out to locate and remove as far as reasonably practicable before refurbishment.

In this regard, the following steps should be followed: once the asbestos is suspected, check the condition of the materials, presume that the material contains asbestos unless you have strong evidence to the contrary, identify and arrange for a specialist to visit the site and pause all work until the materials are sampled and a report submitted by a specialist, assess whether the location of the asbestos means that the material is likely to be disturbed and prepare and implement a plan of action to manage these risks.

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In cases where the premises are currently occupied, the relevant housing manager or resident should be consulted and an agreement for housing and/or other support is to be provided.

Working with Contractors

All workers, including sub-contractors, will be made aware of any existing risk of asbestos materials. Where there is any suspicion of asbestos, contractors appointed to carry out the planned work which has the potential to disturb asbestos materials will be required to provide a written undertaking regarding the measures that they will implement to avoid any risk from asbestos in the building. This should be clearly outlined in the method statement.

Management of Workers

Each employee will be trained in asbestos awareness along with the provision of information to workers about known or presumed asbestos materials, competent supervision of works and any arrangements for ceasing work and making safe if suspect asbestos materials are encountered. Induction training will be provided to all staff but this will not be required if the employee has passed the Asbestos Awareness training course within the last year. We may require some workers, depending on their post, to take asbestos awareness training.

Database

Hinds Building Services will maintain a register of all properties with details of any surveys carried out.

Accessibility

All information, which supports the execution of this policy, will be provided to stakeholders in an accessible format. Where relevant, clients can request alternate accessible formats.

Legal Compliance

Hinds Building Services will ensure compliance with all legislation, regulatory instruments, standards and internal policies, including this policy.

Management Team, Hinds Building Services

Last update: May 2020 (Updated Annually)