Asbestos Awareness Refresher

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a fibrous mineral that over the past two hundred years has been used for its building,
insulating and fire resistant properties in many forms throughout industry and construction.

Why is it a problem?

There are over 5,000 asbestos related disease deaths per year. Asbestos related diseases are generally caused when asbestos fibres are released into the air and then inhaled. The fibres can then aggravate your lungs, and over a period of years cause Asbestosis, Lung Cancer or a form of lung cancer, and Mesothelioma. The effects of the inhalation of these fibres can take many years to present themselves. Smokers are at a far higher risk of asbestos related disease than non-smokers.

Who is at risk?

Anyone exposed to asbestos is at risk. All those trades that disturb the fabric of the building are all
higher risk groups, including electricians and plumbers who come into contact with asbestos insulators.
Families of exposed workers can be at risk through the transfer of fibres on clothes.

Types of asbestos

The main classifications of asbestos are licensed, non-licensed, and notifiable non-licensed.

Licensed asbestos

Can only be worked on and removed by a contractor licensed with the HSE.

Non-licensed asbestos

Can only be worked on and removed by a trained contractor.

Notifiable non-licensed asbestos

Can only be worked on and removed by a trained contractor AND work must be notified to the relevant enforcing authority.

How do you know what is licensed and non-licensed?

All commercial premises must have an asbestos survey and register in place which details the
location
of all asbestos containing materials. It should state precisely what is licensed and non-licensed within

the building.
There is no requirement for domestic properties to have an asbestos register in place.

Where can you find asbestos?

Asbestos can be found in a multitude of places, but it is typically found in:

- Asbestos cement products.
- Textured coatings.
- Floor tiles, textiles and composites.
- Sprayed coatings on ceilings, walls and beams/columns.
- Asbestos insulating board.
- Lagging.

Working with asbestos

Do:

- Make sure you have been properly trained before you start.
- Check whether the work should be notified.
- Stop and ask if you are suspicious something may be asbestos, or think the work might need to be carried out by a licensed contractor or trained person.
- If not trained to work on non-licensed asbestos – STOP and report to your employer.
- If trained to work on non-licensed asbestos:
    - Follow the plan of work and the task guidance sheets.
    - Make sure you take account of other risks such as work at height.
    - Use your protective equipment, including a suitable FFP3 face mask, worn properly.
    - Clean up as you go – stop waste building up.
    - Make sure waste is double-bagged and is disposed of properly at a licensed recycling centre.
    - Wash before breaks and going home.

Don't:

- Use methods that create a lot of dust, like using power tools.
- Sweep up dust and debris – use a Type H vacuum cleaner or damp rags.
- Take home overalls used for asbestos work.
- Reuse disposable clothing or masks.
- Smoke.
- Eat or drink in the work area.

What should those in charge of the job do?

They must:

- Find out if asbestos containing materials are present, and plan the work to avoid disturbing these materials if possible.
- Ensure that anyone who is going to work on asbestos material is trained properly and is supervised.
- Know what work can be carried out on asbestos-containing materials, i.e. does this work need to be carried out by a contractor licensed by HSE?
- Take account of other risks as well as asbestos, e.g. work at height, and take the

necessary precautions to do the job safely.
- Use the equipment and method sheets and the right task sheet to make sure that the job is carried out properly and that exposure to asbestos is kept as low as possible.
- Prepare a plan of work, explaining what the job involves, the work procedures, and what controls to use.
- Provide you with the right equipment, which is clean, in good working order, and protects you against asbestos.
- Train you in using this equipment.
- Make sure the work area is inspected visually at the end of the job to check it's fit for reoccupation.
- Make arrangements for the safe disposal of any asbestos waste.

I have read this asbestos refresher sheet, and I understand that unless I have carried out a working with non-licensed asbestos training course, I cannot carry out any work with asbestos.

I understand that further information will be given to me if requested, and that should I find anything which I believe to be an asbestos carrying material, I should stop and seek advice.

Signed.....

Date.....