



What do property managers need to know about asbestos removal?

QUESTION: I manage an older home that recently sustained damage caused by a leaky roof. Among other things, a significant number of ceiling tiles in a bedroom have been ruined and I think the entire ceiling probably needs to be replaced. I suspect but don't know for sure that the ceiling tiles contain asbestos. Is there anything I need to know before I make arrangements on my owner client's behalf for any repairs that are necessary?

ANSWER: Yes. Materials suspected to contain asbestos should be sampled by a North Carolina-accredited asbestos inspector before any renovation activities are undertaken. An asbestos inspection/survey will inform the owner and you of the presence, location, quantity, type and condition of any asbestos-containing materials. This information will help with project planning, minimize the potential for asbestos exposure to occupants and workers, prevent unnecessary property contamination along with the associated costs to remediate, and ensure the proper disposal of asbestos-containing waste.

QUESTION: How do I confirm that an inspector is accredited?

ANSWER: Accreditation may be verified by asking to see the individual's accreditation card issued by the Health Hazards Control Unit ("HHCUC") of the NC Department of Health and Human Services before beginning the project. You can also verify their accreditation by visiting the HHCUC website at <https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/asbestos/ahmp.html> and clicking on "Find Accredited Asbestos Professionals in N.C.," or calling the HHCUC at 919/707-5950.

QUESTION: If the accredited inspector determines that the ceiling tiles contain asbestos, what do I do then?

ANSWER: You'll need to hire a contractor who has been accredited by the HHCUC to remove the tiles. You can search for an accredited contractor by clicking on "Supervisor" in the "Discipline" box of the "Find Accredited Asbestos Professionals in N.C." feature referenced in the preceding question.

QUESTION: Are any permits required?

ANSWER: An asbestos permit from the HHCUC is required when at least 160 square feet, 260 linear feet, or 35 cubic feet of friable asbestos is to be removed from a building. Permit applications must be submitted to the HHCUC ten (10) working days prior to beginning renovation activities.

There are three local programs in the State of North Carolina responsible for enforcing federal asbestos regulations. These local programs should be contacted concerning specific requirements for projects conducted in their areas. A permit application submitted to the North Carolina Health Hazards Control Unit may be required even when working in the local program areas. The local programs are as follows:

Buncombe County
WNC Regional Air Pollution Control Agency
125 South Lexington Avenue, Suite 101
Asheville, North Carolina 28801
Telephone: 828-250-6777

Forsyth County
Environmental Assistance & Protection
Forsyth County Government Center
201 N. Chestnut Street, 5th Floor
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27101
Telephone: 336-703-2440

Mecklenburg County
Land Use and Environmental Services Agency—Air Quality
2145 Suttle Avenue
Charlotte, North Carolina 28208
Telephone: 704-336-5430

QUESTION: Are there fees for getting an asbestos permit from HHCU?

ANSWER: Yes, an asbestos removal permit fee must be paid to the HHCU unless the owner resides in the dwelling where the removal is to take place. For information on how the fee is calculated, you should contact the HHCU. If the property is located in any of the three counties identified above, you should also contact the county.

QUESTION: What is “friable asbestos?”

ANSWER: “Friable asbestos” is any material containing asbestos that is “friable.” “Friable” is defined as “any material that when dry can be broken, crumbled, pulverized, or reduced to powder by hand pressure, and includes previously nonfriable material after such material becomes damaged to the extent that when dry it can be crumbled, pulverized, or reduced to powder by hand pressure.” “Asbestos containing material” is defined as “material which contains more than one percent (1%) asbestos.”

QUESTION: Say I have a small plumbing job that would require the plumber to remove a very small section of pipe insulation that contains asbestos. Does the plumber have to be an HHCU-accredited asbestos professional to do the work?

ANSWER: There are a number of exemptions from the accreditation requirements, including licensed general contractors, plumbers, electricians, and refrigeration examiners who perform “small-scale, short duration activities” associated with their license.

QUESTION: What is a “small-scale, short duration activity.”

ANSWER: Such activities are defined in the Code of Federal Regulations. They include but are not limited to the following: (i) removal of asbestos-containing insulation on pipes; (ii) removal of small quantities of asbestos-containing insulation on beams or above ceilings; (iii) replacement of an asbestos-containing gasket on a valve; (iv) installation or removal of a small section of drywall; and (v) installation of electrical conduits through or proximate to asbestos-containing materials. Click [here](#) to view the regulation.

QUESTION: In addition to ceiling tiles and pipe insulation, what are other common products that contain asbestos?

ANSWER: Asbestos was at one time used in more than 3,000 different building materials. Some common products that contain asbestos are:

- Vinyl floor tile
- Drywall joint compound
- Attic insulation
- Vinyl sheet flooring
- Cement siding or roofing shingles
- Textured ceilings
- Roofing shingles or felts
- Certain mastics or glues

QUESTION: Where can I get more information about asbestos and asbestos removal?

ANSWER: In addition to the HHCU website address identified above, we suggest you contact Jeffery W. Dellinger, an Industrial Hygiene Consultant Supervisor with the HHCU. Jeff can be reached at 919/707-5972. In addition to being extremely knowledgeable on the subject of asbestos, Jeff is also a great resource on the subject of lead-based paint renovation.

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