

MANAGEMENT OF ASBESTOS WASTE

In this document, *asbestos waste* refers to waste containing asbestos in a concentration greater than one per cent by weight. For safety and health reasons we further recommend that the procedures identified here be met whenever asbestos is present or suspected of being present in a friable material. A friable material easily crumbles with hand pressure and the more friable a material, the more likely it is to release fibres into the air.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that was widely used to insulate buildings and structures between the 1950's and the mid 1970's due to its non-combustibility and flame-retardant properties. Asbestos was also used as a reinforcing or binding agent in plastic, cement and other construction materials due to its strength and flexibility when separated into fibres.

The classification and recommended management practices identified next are consistent with the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* and *Waste Control Regulation*.

Legal Framework and Waste Classification

The *Alberta User Guide for Waste Managers* identifies asbestos waste as non-hazardous provided that it is managed according to the *Guidelines for the Disposal of Asbestos Waste*.

The WCR further deems asbestos waste non-hazardous when generated from specific sources or in small quantities, specifically:

- household hazardous waste in the possession of the householder or while unsegregated in a municipal waste management system
- agricultural waste resulting from farming
- small quantities of hazardous waste (other than highly hazardous wastes described in Table 4b of the Guide) that is produced in an amount less than 5 kilograms per month if solid, or 5 litres per month if liquid and the total quantity accumulated does not exceed 5 kilograms or 5 litres at any time.

Handling and Management of Asbestos Waste

The most important thing to remember when finding friable asbestos-containing materials in a residence, building, or structure is to not disturb the material. Asbestos handling should be restricted to qualified personnel. During removal of friable asbestos from a structure, building, or surface, appropriate clothing and equipment should be used to prevent the asbestos fibers from becoming airborne. Friable waste should be captured as soon as it is removed. Asbestos waste should be disposed of at the local municipal landfill and buried immediately upon arrival at the site.

When removing, handling, and transporting asbestos waste, occupational health and safety, transportation and environmental requirements must be respected. Comprehensive information on these requirements is available through the following documents and sites:

- *Alberta Asbestos Abatement Manual*, prepared by Alberta Human Resources and Employment. This manual provides comprehensive information on all aspects of asbestos management stressing occupational health and safety issues. The 2004 version is available at www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/asbestos_manual.pdf. For questions and additional information call the Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690.
- *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations*, available on-line at www.tc.gc.ca/tdg/clear/tofc.htm or by phoning 1-800-272-9600.
- *Asbestos Waste Disposal Guidelines*, prepared by Alberta Environment and available on-line at www.gov.ab.ca/env/waste/indhaz/index.html. For additional information contact Alberta Environment Regional offices through their website at www.gov.ab.ca/env/regions/index.html.

Additional Information

Alberta Environment does not handle specific proposals or plans regarding asbestos removal from a particular structure. When a contractor or owner of a structure becomes aware or suspects the presence of asbestos in a structure to be demolished, that person is required to file a notice with the Workplace Health and Safety office at the Contact Center prior to disturbing or removing the asbestos from the structure.

Companies that can perform asbestos testing are listed in the Workplace Health and Safety Consultant's Directory available at www.worksafely.org. In addition, a list of asbestos consultants and waste service companies specialized in handling asbestos is available from the local yellow pages directory or by contacting the Environmental Services Association of Alberta at 1-800-661-9278 or (780) 439-6363 or by visiting their web site at www.esaa.org.

Information on the availability of federal programs for asbestos abatement activities can be obtained by contacting Environment Canada, Western and Northern region office, at (780) 468-8034.