

Asbestos

Exposure to asbestos is hazardous to health. As a general rule, all persons involved in the design and construction of buildings should avoid the use of asbestos containing material (ACM) in **buildings** and handle the removal of ACM from **existing buildings** with caution.

Prohibition

2. The spraying of ACM, the use of asbestos insulation for thermal, acoustic and other insulation purposes (including fire protection), and the use of amphibole asbestos (crocidolite, amosite, fibrous actinolite, fibrous anthophyllite and fibrous tremolite) and products containing these asbestos in any industrial or manufacturing process including any building operation are prohibited under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Asbestos) Regulation (Cap 59AD). Since 1996, the import and sale of amosite and crocidolite are banned under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (Cap 311).

3. All authorized persons, registered structural engineers, registered geotechnical engineers and registered contractors should note these statutory provisions to avoid abortive work.

Control and Abatement Works

4. Building activities emitting asbestos fibres should be controlled and where necessary, abatement works should be carried out. Generally speaking, for all building works where asbestos is present or suspected to be present, the control and abatement measures required include the following :

- (a) appointment of a registered asbestos consultant;
- (b) preparation of an appropriate abatement plan;
- (c) a survey including the taking of samples and the testing by a registered asbestos laboratory;
- (d) appointment of a registered asbestos contractor;
- (e) enclosure of asbestos work areas;
- (f) advance notice for commencement of works;
- (g) protection of the workers concerned; and
- (h) segregation and disposal of asbestos contaminated waste.

/General

General Information

5. The Labour Department, through its Occupational Safety and Health Branch, gives advice on the health and safety of workers engaged in any process involving ACM.

6. The Asbestos Management and Control Section of the Environmental Protection Department gives general advice on asbestos management and abatement techniques and keeps registers of asbestos consultants, asbestos contractors, asbestos supervisors and asbestos laboratories.

7. For some asbestos abatement works involving only low risk and readily identifiable non-friable ACM, the requirement of the services of a consultant may be exempted. An exemption list was published by notice in the Gazette in June 1997.

8. Relevant information on the subject can also be found in the following publications :

- (a) Code of Practice: Safety and Health at Work with Asbestos published by the Labour Department.
- (b) Health Hazards of Asbestos published by the Labour Department.
- (c) 5 sets of Code of Practice on Asbestos Control published by the Environmental Protection Department :-
 - Handling, Transportation and Disposal of Asbestos Waste;
 - Preparation of Asbestos Investigation Report, Asbestos Management Plan and Asbestos Abatement Plan;
 - Asbestos Work Using Full Containment or Mini Containment Method;
 - Safe Handling of Low Risk Asbestos Containing Material; and
 - Asbestos Work Using Glove Bag Method.
- (d) 2 leaflets published by the Environmental Protection Department:-
 - Environmental Asbestos Control; and
 - Asbestos Removal of Unauthorised Building Works.
- (e) Practice Note 2/97 Handling of Asbestos Containing Materials in Buildings issued by the Professional Persons Environmental Consultative Committee.
- (f) Code of Practice for Demolition of Buildings published by the Buildings Department.

9. A similar practice note has been issued to registered contractors.

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