

### **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 **new buildings** and handle the removal of ACM from **existing buildings** with caution.

#### **Prohibition**

2. To protect public health, all references to asbestos or any ACM have been deleted from the Buildings Ordinance (Cap 123) and relevant Regulations. Similarly, the spraying of ACM and the use of crocidolite (blue asbestos), amosite (brown asbestos) or any substance containing either of the minerals in any industrial or manufacturing process including any building operation are prohibited under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Asbestos) Special Regulations (Cap 59). Furthermore, the import and sale of blue and brown asbestos will be banned when the relevant provisions of the Air Pollution Control (Amendment) Ordinance 1993 come into operation in late 1996.

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

#### **Control and Abatement Works**

4. Building activities emitting asbestos fibres are 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, 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) enclosure of asbestos work areas;
- (e) advance notice for commencement of works; and
- (f) segregation and disposal of asbestos contaminated waste.

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## General Information

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

6. The Asbestos Management Section of the Environmental Protection Department gives general advice on asbestos management and abatement techniques and offers information on the registration of qualified persons.

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 to this effect will be published by notice in the Gazette by the Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands in due course.

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

- (a) Guide to the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Asbestos) Special Regulations 1986 published by the Labour Department;
- (b) A reference note on the Control of Asbestos at Work published by the Labour Department; and
- (c) Code of Practice on the Handling, Transportation and Disposal of Asbestos Waste published by the Environmental Protection Department.
- (d) A booklet entitled "A Guide to Control of Asbestos under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance" to be published by the Environmental Protection Department for free distribution to the public. This will contain a list of commonly found ACM.

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

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Ref. : BD GR/BM/4

First issued September 1985

This revision January 1996 (AD/LM)

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