

Occupant Notification in Buildings Containing Asbestos

 epa.gov/asbestos/occupant-notification-buildings-containing-asbestos

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The material in this section is based on regulations from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration found at 29 CFR § 1910.1001(j) Exit Exit EPA website.

Action for Owners

Building owners, in addition to informing building workers as required by OSHA, should also inform occupants and tenants about the location and physical condition of the asbestos-containing material (ACM), and stress the need to avoid disturbing the material.



Building owners should inform occupants about the presence of ACM by distributing written notices, posting signs or labels in a central location where affected occupants can see them, and holding awareness or information sessions. Some states and localities have “right-to-know” laws that may require that all occupants, workers, and visitors in buildings with ACM be informed that asbestos is present. OSHA also requires warning signs to be displayed at each regulated area so that an employee may read the signs and take necessary protective steps before entering the area.

Building owners should inform new employees about the presence of ACM before they begin work. OSHA requires this notification for employees who will perform housekeeping activities where ACM may be disturbed. Additional steps may be needed for illiterate or non-English speaking workers and other occupants who may encounter language difficulties. For example, owners should consider providing information sessions in languages other than English where a significant number of workers, occupants, or visitors do not speak English. Furthermore OSHA regulations require that employers ensure employees can comprehend the warning signs posted. Owners may wish to consider developing a warning label system for illiterate workers showing them pictures about potential hazards of disturbing ACM and showing them where ACM is located. Translations of the warning labels should be provided by the owner for non-English speaking personnel.

Information for Occupants (workers, tenants and others)

Occupants should be notified for two reasons: (1) There may be a potential hazard in their vicinity; and (2) informed persons are less likely to disturb the material and cause fibers to be released into the air. All employees and tenants or tenant representatives likely to disturb ACM should be included in the notification program on a continuing basis. The specific information given to types of building occupants will vary. For example, because building maintenance and service workers carry out certain tasks that office workers or tenants do not perform, they should receive additional information. Most important, operations and maintenance workers should receive the training they need to perform their tasks safely. For information on training requirements, see the OSHA regulations at 29 CFR § 1910.1001(j)(7) (PDF)Exit Exit EPA website (53 pp, 408K, about PDF).

Whatever its form, the information given to building occupants and workers should address the following points to the extent they reflect building conditions:

- ACM has been found in the building and is located in areas where the material could be disturbed.
- The condition of the ACM, and the response that is appropriate for that condition.
- Asbestos only presents a health risk when fibers become airborne and are inhaled. The mere presence of intact ACM may not represent a health risk.
- The ACM is found in the following locations (e.g., ceilings in Rooms 101 and G-323, walls in the lobby, above suspended ceilings in the first floor corridor, on columns in the main entry, on pipes in the boiler room).
- Do not disturb the ACM (e.g., do not push furniture against the ACM, do not damage thermal system insulation (TSI)).
- Report any evidence of disturbance or damage of ACM to (name, location, and phone number of the asbestos project manager (APM)).
- Report any dust or debris that might come from the ACM or suspect ACM, any change in the condition of the ACM, or any improper action (relative to ACM) of building personnel to (name, location, and phone number of APM).
- Cleaning and maintenance personnel are taking special precautions during their work to properly clean up any asbestos debris and to avoid disturbing ACM.
- All ACM is inspected periodically and additional measures will be taken if needed to protect the health of building occupants.