

Asbestos on your site?

You have a right to see the owner's asbestos report. Demand it.

Asbestos was used extensively in a wide variety of construction materials. If you're doing renovation or maintenance jobs, you need to protect yourself, your workers, and others in the area.

The first step is to ask your client (or your employer) for the **owner's asbestos report**. Do this when you're bidding on a job.

Owner's asbestos report

The owner of the building must complete a report saying whether asbestos-containing material is or is not present. (Asbestos-containing material is defined as containing

0.5% or more asbestos.) The requirements for this report are in Ontario Regulation 278/05: *Designated Substance—Asbestos on Construction Projects and in Buildings and Repair Operations*.

Even if there's no asbestos, the owner still needs to write the report, saying that there's no asbestos. If asbestos is present, the report must

- ✓ contain drawings, plans, or specifications showing the location of the asbestos
- ✓ state, for each location, the condition of the asbestos and whether the material is friable

- ✓ identify the type of asbestos (e.g., chrysotile, tremolite, amosite, actinolite, crocidolite, etc.) if the material is sprayed-on.

If the composition of material is unknown—or if suspicious material is encountered during the course of work—the owner can have it tested to determine its content. Otherwise, the work must be done as if the material contains asbestos—and a type of asbestos other than chrysotile in the case of sprayed-on friable material. If it's known ahead of time that the work will be done as if the material contains asbestos, the owner's asbestos report must state this.

The owner must give the asbestos report to all contractors bidding on the job. The constructor must provide the report to all subcontractors and workers.

The requirement for an owner's asbestos report does not apply to owners of residential buildings of four dwelling units or less, where one of the units is occupied by the owner or the owner's family. But you can ask homeowners if they know about asbestos in the building (e.g., in the house siding or vinyl floor tile). If they don't know of any, ask them for information about the building (such as its age) or its materials (such as vermiculite insulation, which can contain asbestos). This information can help you identify possible locations. ■

What if, during your work, you unexpectedly find material that may contain asbestos?

- ✓ Stop all work in the area.
- ✓ Evacuate and isolate the area.
- ✓ Notify the constructor (the principal contractor).
- ✓ If you are the constructor, you must notify, orally and in writing, the Ministry of Labour, the owner, all contractors, and the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative, if any.
- ✓ For what to do now, refer to Ontario Regulation 278/05: *Designated Substance—Asbestos on Construction Projects and in Buildings and Repair Operations* (available on www.csa.o.org). The regulation will tell you what protective measures and controls are required. Refer to Section 10 in particular.

You can continue to work if you treat the material as if it contains asbestos—and a type of asbestos other than chrysotile in the case of sprayed-on friable material. Implement the protective measures and controls required for the type of work you're doing, as described in Regulation 278/05. You can also arrange to have the material tested to determine its content.

Mandatory asbestos certification

By Dru Sahai, Occupational Hygienist, CSAO

Who must be certified?

As of November 1, 2007, all **workers** and **supervisors** who perform Type 3 asbestos work must be certified to do their work. Certification is not required for

- ▶ workers in Type 1 or Type 2 operations
- ▶ workers entering Type 1, 2, or 3 work areas to perform work not related to the asbestos operation.

The workers that do not require certification are, however, required to have asbestos awareness training.

There are two asbestos abatement certification programs: one for workers (*Asbestos Abatement Worker*) and one for supervisors (*Asbestos Abatement Supervisor*). Before becoming a certified asbestos abatement *supervisor* you must be certified as an asbestos abatement *worker*.

How do I get certified?

Here are the steps:

1. One of the following groups must register you for an in-school training program approved by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU):
 - ✓ employers engaged in Type 3 asbestos work
 - ✓ joint local union/employer training committees.

Note: The employer must apply to the MTCU for “signing authority” before it can enroll you in an approved training program.

2. Take the training that you need.
3. Once you have completed the in-school part, you are eligible to write the asbestos abatement worker or supervisor test. Each test is administered by the MTCU (not the training provider) and consists of 40 multiple-choice questions.
4. If you pass the test, the “signing authority” (the employer) sends the required paperwork to the MTCU. This confirms that you have successfully completed the in-school training program and have passed the test. The MTCU will then issue you a Certificate of Completion.

Can experienced workers or supervisors take the test without taking the training?

Until November 1, 2008, experienced Type 3 workers and supervisors can take the tests without having to take the in-school training programs.

If you fail the test, however, you will be required to take an in-school training program approved by the MTCU.



Experienced workers and supervisors from outside Ontario can take the tests without having to take the in-school training. If they fail the test, however, they will be required to take an in-school training program approved by the MTCU.

You are considered experienced if you have at least 1,000 hours of experience performing Type 3 work before November 1, 2007. You must prove this with an Asbestos Work Report Form 1 (or equivalent document for those from outside Ontario) or a letter on official company letterhead.

Where do I get more info?

For more details, contact your local MTCU office (find it by calling Employment Ontario at 1-800-387-5656). ■