



Human Resources Department

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Tami Douglas-Schatz, Director

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To: County Employees
From: John Schwind, Safety Officer
Date: January 1, 2010
Subject: Employee Notice of Pre-1979 Buildings with Asbestos

As a result of Assembly Bill 3713, passed in 1989, the state **Health and Safety Code (Section 29515 (a))** requires all employers with employees occupying buildings constructed prior to 1979 to notify employees of:

- The existence of, conclusions from, and the contents of any survey conducted to determine the existence and location of asbestos-containing construction materials **(ACMs)**.
- Specific locations within the building(s) where ACMs are present in any quantity. General procedures and handling restrictions necessary to prevent and minimize disturbance, release and exposure to ACMs.
- A summary of the results of any bulk sample analysis or air monitoring conducted, including information describing where the specific monitoring data and sampling procedures are available.
- Potential health risks or impacts that may result from exposure to the ACMs.

The County of San Luis Obispo surveys buildings where suspected ACMs are present, to determine the specific location of ACMs in the building. These locations are summarized in Exhibit B. Current information on specific locations can be obtained from Risk Management, General Services, or your department's Safety Representative.

The general procedure necessary to prevent or minimize disturbance of the ACMs is to avoid contact with the areas indicated in Exhibit B where possible. If employees notice evidence of physical damage, i.e. water damage or any contact that causes the materials to crumble, flake, or chip, the County Safety Officer should be notified at **781-5959**.

Summaries of any testing, monitoring, or analysis are available for review by making an appointment with the County Safety Officer.

Potential health risks or impacts are discussed in Exhibit A, attached.



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Exhibit A

The health risks associated with exposure to asbestos have been recognized for a long time, especially in the shipbuilding and mining industries. Most asbestos-related illness is the result of long term exposures (on the order of years) to high levels of asbestos (levels above the Permissible Exposure Limit – PEL). While asbestos may be present in some buildings, it exists primarily as a component of solid building materials such as certain plasters or adhesives. The level of asbestos in most buildings is low to none, and therefore represents little or no health risk. However, there are a number of steps which may be taken for protection when exposure to asbestos is suspected.

Asbestos is a generic term that applies to a number of naturally occurring, hydrated mineral silicates incombustible in air and separable into filaments. The most widely used in industry in the United States is chrysotile ($3\text{MgO} \cdot 2\text{SiO}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$), a fibrous form of serpentine. Asbestos is a strong durable material with a variety of uses in industry and manufacturing. In buildings it is contained in plasterboard, insulation, roofing, flooring, siding, and ceiling plaster. Other uses of asbestos include friction products such as clutch facings and brake linings, caulking materials, theater curtains, fire-protective clothing and some concrete-like products.

The health problems associated with asbestos exposure are due to its physical properties. Asbestos can decompose into a friable form, creating microscopic, airborne fibers which can be inhaled or ingested. As long as the asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) are bonded into durable tiles, slats, mastics (adhesives) or panels, asbestos does not pose a significant health risk. However, if the ACM becomes crumbly, as in water-damaged tiles, or because of physical damage caused by improper maintenance, they can become a hazard. Friable ACMs can spread through the environment. In a building, for example, ACMs can get into the ventilation system and travel to other parts of the structure, contaminating the air breathed by the occupants.

When inhaled, asbestos fibers can cause several health problems. Asbestosis, for example, produces shortness of breath and permanent lung damage. Mesothelioma, a rare cancer of the lining around the lungs, heart or abdominal organs, is an example of damage caused by exposure to ACMs. Bronchiogenic cancers like pneumoconiosis may also occur as a result of ACM exposure. Asbestos exposure via ingestion may also be related to certain cancers of the stomach, large intestine, kidney, larynx, and rectum.

If you have been exposed to asbestos in the workplace, promptly inform your supervisor or Risk Management. Appropriate steps can then be taken to limit further exposure and to address health risks associated with the exposure. Regular medical examinations, potentially including such about ten years after the first exposure, are important to aid in the early detection and treatment of any asbestos-related problems that may arise. In this examination, your physician will take a detailed family history of you, and your family's asbestos exposure.



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The following are County-owned buildings identified to contain asbestos materials. If there are sample results or air analysis reports available, an asterisk (*) is indicated next to the location.

BUILDING

LOCATION

Old Courthouse	Office floor tiles
Old Courthouse	Center section of plaster ceiling
Annex building, government center	Office floor tiles
Annex building, government center	Clerk and D.A. break rooms - counter tops
Building 1200	Pipes - pipe wrap
Atascadero Health building	Roofing materials, linoleum, wallboard joint compound, all floor tiles except off-white tiles*
General Hospital	Fire doors - core material
Lopez Lake	Treatment plant - roofing materials

For information on specific locations of asbestos and the method of management being used to control it, call Risk Management at 781-5959.