SAFETY UNLIMITED, Inc.

Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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Asbestos in Construction

'Asbestos' is the name given to a group of a naturally-occurring minerals used for fireproofing and many other applications. These minerals are mined from rock in the form of a fiber that can be spun or woven into fabric and other products. Its many qualities led to widespread use before the serious health effects were common knowledge.

Asbestos is used in many products because of its high tensile strength, flexibility, and resistance to chemical and thermal breakdown. Asbestos is used in insulation, fireproofing materials, automotive brakes, cement and wallboard materials, floor tiles, and roofing material

Chrysotile (a member of the Serpentine group) is the most common type of asbestos found in buildings. Chrysotile makes up 90-95% of all the asbestos in the United States. The federal government declared a moratorium on asbestos production in the early 1970s. Installation of these products continued into the early 1980s.

Risk of asbestos exposure:

The construction trades most at risk from asbestos are: insulators, plumbers, pipefitters, electricians, sheet metal workers, roofers, bricklayers, painters, and steel workers. Any construction worker may be exposed during maintenance, remodeling, renovation, or demolition of older buildings.

Exposure:

Disturbing asbestos materials may generate airborne asbestos fibers. Asbestos is only dangerous if it becomes airborne. To be a significant health concern, asbestos fibers must be inhaled over an extended period of time. Asbestos fibers then accumulate in the lungs. As exposure increases, the risk of asbestos-related diseases also increases. As long as asbestos containing materials are not damaged, the asbestos fibers do not become airborne and do not pose a health threat.

Asbestos related diseases:

Asbestosis is a scarring of the lung tissue. The scarring impacts the elasticity of the lungs and lowers its ability to transfer oxygen and carbon dioxide. Asbestosis is a slowly progressive disease, taking 15 to 30 years to fully develop.

Mesothelioma is a type of cancer. This disease attacks the lining of the space holding the lungs, called the "pleura." Mesothelioma is considered to be related exclusively to asbestos exposure. Mesothelioma may take 30 to 40 years to develop.

Lung Cancer is a malignant tumor in the lungs. The tumor grows through the surrounding tissues, invading and blocking the air passages of the lungs. The time between exposure to asbestos and the occurrence of lung cancer may be as long as 20 to 30 years. It should be

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noted that there is a multiplying effect between smoking and asbestos exposure, which creates a high susceptibility to lung cancer.

Protect yourself:

Before you disturb asbestos (loosen the fibers) you must have special training. OSHA requires a "competent person" to be designated for all worksites that will involve asbestos work.

The competent person should inspect the jobsite regularly, be knowledgeable of personal protective equipment, and supervise the work to be done to ensure all safety measures are being taken to prevent exposure to asbestos.

"You Can Breathe Easier... By Protecting Yourself Against Asbestos"

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Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	*Subject:*
Location:	*Date:*
Conducted By:	*Trainer Signature:*

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests