

## AREAS WHERE ASBESTOS MATERIALS COULD BE FOUND

- STEAM PIPES, BOILERS, and FURNACE DUCTS insulated with an asbestos blanket or asbestos paper tape.
- RESILIENT FLOOR TILES (vinyl asbestos, asphalt, and rubber), the backing on VINYL SHEET FLOORING, and ADHESIVES used for installing floor tile.
- CEMENT SHEET, MILLBOARD, and PAPER used as insulation around furnaces and wood burning stoves.
- DOOR GASKETS in furnaces, wood stoves, and coal stoves.
- SOUNDPROOFING OR DECORATIVE MATERIAL sprayed on walls and ceilings.
- PATCHING AND JOINT COMPOUNDS for walls and ceilings, and TEXTURED PAINTS.
- ASBESTOS CEMENT ROOFING, SHINGLES, and SIDING.
- ARTIFICIAL ASHES AND EMBERS sold for use in gas-fired fireplaces. Also, other older household products such as FIREPROOF GLOVES, STOVE-TOP PADS, IRONING BOARD COVERS, and certain HAIRDRYERS.
- AUTOMOBILE BRAKE PADS AND LININGS, CLUTCH FACINGS, and GASKETS.

## FIVE MAJOR FACTS

1. Although asbestos is hazardous, human risk of asbestos disease depends upon exposure.
2. Based on available data from across the nation, prevailing asbestos levels in buildings appear to be very low. Accordingly, the health risk faced by building occupants also appears to be very low.
3. Removal is often not a building owner's best course of action to reduce asbestos exposure. In fact, an improper removal can create a dangerous situation where one did not previously exist.
4. EPA only requires asbestos removal in order to prevent significant public exposure to asbestos, such as during building renovation or demolition.
5. EPA does recommend in-place management whenever asbestos is discovered. Instead of removal, a conscientious in-place management program will usually control fiber releases, particularly when the materials are not significantly damaged and are not likely to be disturbed.



# Asbestos Awareness



This brochure is a supplement to the Asbestos Awareness Training Program. For more information, contact the Manager of Environmental Health and Safety, (330) 672-1950, [dbaden@kent.edu](mailto:dbaden@kent.edu), (330) 672-9565 or [dehead@kent.edu](mailto:dehead@kent.edu)

**Environmental Health  
and Safety**

## WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is the name of a group of minerals that occur naturally in the environment. Asbestos deposits can be found throughout the world and it is still mined in Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the former Soviet Union.

## WHY AND WHERE IS IT USED?

Asbestos differs from other minerals in its crystal development, which are long, thin fibers. These fibers are very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. For these reasons asbestos was added to many older building materials including floor tiles, ceiling tiles, insulation on pipes and ducts, acoustical and decorative coatings, and roofing materials. These types of building materials are presumed to contain asbestos if installed before 1980, unless testing has proven otherwise.



microscopic view  
of asbestos fibers

## HEALTH RISKS

When materials containing asbestos are left intact and undisturbed they do not pose a health risk to building occupants. There is a potential for exposure only when the material becomes damaged to the extent that asbestos fibers become airborne and are inhaled.

Asbestos is more likely to release fibers when it is friable. The term friable means the material can be easily crumbled. If powdered or friable forms of asbestos are disturbed and become airborne, an inhalation hazard may result.

In non-friable materials like floor tile, ceiling tiles, laboratory cabinet tops, and caulks, the asbestos fibers are tightly bound in a matrix which prevents the release of fibers to the environment unless the material is abraded, sanded or sawed.

## EPA RECOMMENDATIONS

The EPA recommends a practical approach that protects the health of building occupants. This approach includes locating and identifying asbestos materials in buildings, and proper management of the material.

## ASBESTOS EXPOSURE

If exposed to asbestos, several factors may influence whether harmful health effects will occur. These factors include:

- ◆ the dose (how much)
- ◆ the duration (how long)
- ◆ whether or not you smoke

Generally, adverse health effects from asbestos are the result of long-term exposure to high concentration of airborne fibers. According to the EPA, airborne asbestos levels in buildings are typically very much lower than those identified in industrial work places where asbestos health effects have been observed.

People who have been exposed to asbestos *and* are also exposed to cigarette smoke, have a greater risk of developing lung cancer than someone who does not smoke.

## REPORTING

Damaged asbestos containing materials should be reported to Environmental Health and Safety at 330-672-1950 or 330-672-9565. Environmental Health and Safety staff are available to visit the area, determine if a suspect material contains asbestos, and to perform a hazard assessment. To avoid asbestos exposure, never attempt to handle damaged asbestos.