Asbestos Policy

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this asbestos policy is to protect the health of Western Michigan University employees who may be exposed to asbestos and to ensure adherence to regulations governing asbestos exposures in the workplace. Asbestos can be found in items such as automotive brake parts, gasket materials, siding and roofing materials, pipe insulation, floor tiles, ceiling tiles, sound proofing, theater curtains, plaster, and possibly other structural parts of a building.

Responsibilities

Employees who may encounter or have the potential to disturb asbestos-containing materials (ACM) during their work activities must receive yearly asbestos awareness training arranged through the Division of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). This training requirement at a minimum applies to custodial and skilled trades staff. The training shall include the health effects of asbestos, locations of ACM and presumed asbestos-containing materials (PACM) in university buildings, recognition of ACM and PACM damage and deterioration, requirements in the standard related to housekeeping, and proper response to fiber release episodes.

WMU employees are not qualified to remove or disturb asbestos-containing materials. During any repairs or work on equipment or structures where any ACM or PACM exists or where contact may occur during work activities, employees must notify their supervisor of the potential for asbestos exposure before beginning the job. Employees must also report any observed damaged asbestos-containing materials. The supervisor shall then contact EHS who in turn will ascertain the presence or absence of any ACM. If asbestos is found, this division will designate the measures, which will be taken to eliminate the possibility of asbestos exposures to the employees working around the ACM and to ensure adherence to environmental and occupational regulations.

Prior to renovation activities in a building or demolition of a building, a licensed asbestos abatement contractor shall remove any ACM that is exposed or will be exposed during the renovation. The Western Michigan University project supervisor shall contact EHS during the planning stages of the renovation or demolition. EHS will ensure that a complete asbestos survey is performed and the proper removal procedures outlined.

Prior to the demolition of a building, the project supervisor shall contact EHS to ensure that all ACM has been identified for proper removal by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor.

The sampling results for ACM and PACM in university buildings shall be kept on file at EHS. That data is available to any employee wishing to review it.

02/2011