

# Asbestos—Type 1 operations (low risk)

*Before giving this safety talk, ensure the type of asbestos operation has been confirmed.*

## Explain dangers

Asbestos is a fibre that was used in many building materials up until the 1980s. Some products that are installed today still contain asbestos.

Breathing in asbestos fibres can cause:

- Asbestosis (i.e., scarring of the lungs that makes it difficult to breathe)
- Lung cancer
- Mesothelioma (i.e., cancer in the lining of the chest and/or abdomen)

### Quick facts about mesothelioma

1. Most people who get mesothelioma have been exposed to asbestos.
2. Mesothelioma is an extremely painful disease.
3. There is no cure for mesothelioma.
4. People usually live for only two years once diagnosed.

There are three types of asbestos operations under Ontario law: Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3.

In Type 1 operations, the risk of asbestos exposure to workers is low if specific procedures are followed.

Asbestos-containing materials (ACM) in Type 1 operations are non-friable. The fibres in the material are locked in by cement, vinyl, or another binding agent.

However, cutting, grinding, abrading, sanding, breaking, drilling, or vibrating the material may be enough to release the fibres.

Some common types of non-friable asbestos-containing materials include

- Gaskets
- Asbestos cement
- Vinyl tiles and acoustical plaster and tiles
- Roofing felts
- Drywall joint-filling compounds

## Identify controls

- Before beginning work, use a damp cloth or HEPA vacuum to clean up any visible dust.
- Use a HEPA vacuum or damp mop to clean up asbestos dust and waste on a regular basis so it does not build up.
- Take steps to control the spread of dust to other work areas. Use drop sheets or other suitable material.
- Wet drop sheets and dispose of them immediately after clean-up.
- Dispose of all asbestos waste and coveralls in suitable, dust-tight containers labeled with warning signs. Remove waste from the workplace frequently.
- Damp wipe or HEPA vacuum rigid barriers or portable enclosures. Otherwise, do not reuse them. Never reuse drop sheets.
- Never use compressed air to clean the work area.
- For non-friable asbestos, wet the material using a wetting agent and only use non-powered hand tools.
- Do not eat, drink, chew gum, or smoke in areas where asbestos could be present.
- Although the risk of exposure to asbestos is low for Type 1 operations, you may choose to use a respirator and protective clothing.
- Damp wipe or HEPA vacuum all personal protective equipment such as respirators or protective coveralls before leaving the work area.
- Always wash your face and hands before leaving the work area.
- Restrict access to the work area where asbestos work is being done.

## Demonstrate

Using the owner's record or report of asbestos (if applicable), review the following with your crew:

- The location of ACM on site
- The areas to keep away from
- The specific procedures to follow