

Asbestos Awareness

OSHA Class IV Training



ASBESTOS AWARENESS
OSHA Class IV Training
by The Asbestos Institute

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First Edition

Printed in the United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Chapter 1: Background and History	9
Chapter 2: Health Effects of Asbestos Exposure	15
Chapter 3: Federal Asbestos Regulations	21
About The Asbestos Institute	27
Other Books by The Asbestos Institute, Inc.	29

Introduction

This information manual meets the requirements of OSHA for Class IV asbestos training and of EPA for Asbestos Awareness. The intended concept in both cases is for “communication of hazards” to employees who may come in contact with asbestos containing building materials (ACBM). This training does not allow the employee to disturb the ACBM, but to conduct normal custodial work that may require contact with the material. Examples would be mopping a floor covered with asbestos containing floor tile or wiping a surface material which contains asbestos. These activities do not pose an asbestos exposure hazard to the employee. However, he has a legal right to know about hazardous chemicals in his workplace, in this case asbestos.

ACBM is in most buildings in the United States. ACBM is simply a manufactured construction material containing more than 1% asbestos. The vast majority of perhaps 3000 different ACBM’s are what OSHA would call “intact” material. This means that the fibers of asbestos are bound in the matrix of the ACBM, and cannot float in the air. The ACBM poses no health threat by itself. The only potential asbestos health threat is the inhalation of airborne asbestos fibers. Historically, the inhalation of asbestos fibers most likely to cause a disease is very prolonged exposure to high levels of

generated airborne asbestos. This has been documented most notably in the processing of the asbestos mineral, in the asbestos manufacturing industry and in the application of some materials such as fireproofing and pipe insulation. These activities have not been done in the US for almost 40 years, and are not likely to be done in the future.

By the end of the 1970's, EPA had legally banned the use of "high risk" material such as fire proofing, spray applied "popcorn" ceilings and asbestos containing pipe insulation. Asbestos inspections are required before demolition and renovation of buildings, but are not required for the normal operation of public, commercial and industrial buildings. However, OSHA, in 1994 promulgated our current construction standard for asbestos, which presumes ACM for any "friable" (easily crumbled) surfacing such as fireproofing or popcorn ceilings, any pipe, tank or boiler insulation and any asphalt or vinyl flooring material in buildings constructed through 1980 (before 1981) and requires the building owner to inform outside contractors who may work in his building, his own employees and commercial tenants of the presence of these "presumed" materials. OSHA also classifies normal custodial work that may contact ACM or PACM (Presumed Asbestos Containing Material) as Class IV work and requires training for employees who do this work.