THUNDER BAY CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Asbestos Awareness for School Staff

As per Regulations and the OHSA the Board is required to have an Asbestos Management Plan. All employees should be aware of and follow the plan.

What is Asbestos?
Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous rock. In Ontario, the most used types of asbestos have been chrysotile, amosite, and crocidolite.

Asbestos is fire-resistant and has good heat, sound, and electrical insulation properties. For these reasons, a large quantity of asbestos is found in buildings constructed prior to 1980.

What are the health risks?
Asbestos fibres may be released into the air when friable asbestos material is handled. It is when these fibres are breathed in that there may be a health risk. However, when the asbestos containing materials are non-friable, then the risk is much lower.

The health risk increases depending on the number of fibres inhaled and the duration of the exposure period.

Asbestos associated illnesses:
Asbestosis: Pulmonary fibrosis (damage and scarring to lung tissue) that develops slowly following an intense exposure to asbestos fibres. It is only after 15+ years that the disease can be detected by X-ray.

Lung Cancer: Breathing in asbestos fibres increases the risk of lung cancer. Smokers who are exposed to asbestos fibres have a significantly higher risk of developing lung cancer.

Mesothelioma: Mesothelioma is a rare but highly malignant cancer. It attacks the lining of the lung (pleura) or the abdomen (peritoneum). The disease manifests itself 30 to 40 years after exposure. By the time Mesothelioma is diagnosed it is too late for treatment.

All three diseases are progressive and irreversible.

When are you at risk?
You are at risk when you are exposed to asbestos fibres in the air you breathe. This occurs when work or activities you or someone else does, damages, or disturbs material which contains asbestos. There is a higher risk when the asbestos material is friable compared to material that is non-friable (lower risk of exposure).

Friable – Definition
Asbestos material, when dry and subjected to hand pressure, may easily crumble to a powder form. As a powder it may become an airborne fibre and easily inhaled.

What are examples of friable asbestos containing materials?
Examples of friable asbestos include Fireproofing on beams, walls and ceilings, insulation on pipes, walls, ceiling plaster and stucco, ceiling tiles, insulation boards for partitions and false ceilings, fire doors and fire resisting divisions, and wire and cable sheathing.

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Non-Friable – Definition
Non-friable materials are materials that have the asbestos component locked into a cement or resin matrix. These materials cannot be easily crushed and fibres can only become airborne as the result of high-speed cutting, grinding, or abrading of the material.

What are examples of non-friable asbestos containing materials?
Examples of non-friable material include Asbestos cement products like flat or corrugated sheets, tiles or other panels for roofs and facades, drinking water and wastewater pipes and lines, waste networks, ventilation, and stack pipes. Also found in other products like glues and mastics, paints, vinyl tiles, asphalt roofing sheets, and asphalt road surfacing materials.

Asbestos Survey
Most Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board buildings contain asbestos in one form or another.

All Schools have a current asbestos survey completed that identifies the type and location of all Asbestos Containing Materials present in each building. A print copy of the survey MUST be kept in the main office area of the school for staff to access.

Teaching, Office, and all other Support Staff Responsibilities
All staff MUST be aware of the location of their building's asbestos plan. Consult the plan before moving ANY ceiling tile, mounting items on drywall etc. to ensure your activity is safe to proceed.

All staff MUST be familiar with the hazards associated with asbestos and know the location of asbestos within your work area which can be found in the asbestos survey. You MUST work in a manner that does not disturb or damage any asbestos containing material.

All staff MUST promptly report to their supervisor, any damage to known or possible asbestos containing material.

It is important that **ALL** staff understand that **no one is to disturb any walls, ceiling, floors, or other components of the building** without consulting the Principal and Plant Services staff. Trained facilities personnel, select IT staff, and outside contractors may be involved in the type of activity that disturbs building material only after verifying that the area does not contain any asbestos. Only those contracting staff that have received specific asbestos remediation training and are approved by the Board to complete the activity can safely handle asbestos containing material.

Staff **SHALL NOT** alter building structure or materials under any circumstance including:

- Attaching or removing anything to a wall. Bulletin boards are the only place classroom items can be hung.
- Puncturing a door by stapling, nailing, screwing, or cutting.
- Moving or hanging anything from ceiling tiles, ceilings, or ceiling grids.
- Disturbing flooring by removing or lifting floor tiles.
- Attaching anything to a window or window frame.
- Painting ceilings, ceiling tiles, walls, or floors.

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Drywall and Asbestos Containing Joint Compound
Several of our buildings have drywall joint compounds that contain asbestos. This information is noted in the building's asbestos plan and notes specific locations where drywall joint compound has been tested. If you are in a location where asbestos containing drywall joint compound was found then we treat **ALL** the compound in the building as asbestos containing.

Other locations where asbestos has been found in TBCDSB Buildings Asbestos has also been found in primer on block walls, 12 x 12 floor tile, Mastic under tile and behind cork boards, mortar joints in block, classroom doors, etc.

Allowable activities and fastening devices for asbestos containing drywall compound
Asbestos Regulation 278/05 allows for the following procedure to be used when securing anything to drywall that has asbestos containing compound.

1. Attached the item to the drywall using adhesive, glue, or double-sided tape.
2. Use of a screw or wall plug and screw, when the screw or plug is installed in the wall using hand tools only.
3. NO MECHANICAL MEANS OR POWER TOOLS ARE ALLOWED.

Steps to take when you find damaged or disturbed asbestos containing material If you discover asbestos containing material that is disturbed or damaged then you MUST contact your Supervisor immediately, the area may need to be evacuated and closed off to access.

STAFF **ARE NOT** TO MAKE ANY ATTEMPT TO CLEAN UP ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIAL.

Only certified contractors who have been trained are qualified and designated to clean up friable asbestos material.