

ASBESTOS IN COUNCIL PREMISES – A Quick guide

Who needs to know about Asbestos?

- This Information is aimed at all staff, especially premise managers, receptionists, maintenance and caretaking staff.
- Don't panic – asbestos is only dangerous when disturbed. If it is safely managed & contained it doesn't present a health hazard.

What has the Council done to manage asbestos?

- All premises have been surveyed to identify the location & condition of asbestos containing materials (ACMs). Findings are recorded in the premise Asbestos Register.
- Where ACMs have been identified in poor condition, they have been encapsulated, enclosed or removed.
- Where ACMs have been identified in good condition, they have been left, contained and managed. Removing ACMs may be more dangerous than simply containing them.
- **All premises are required to complete and regularly review a separate Asbestos Management Premises Plan** illustrating how they locally manage risk from asbestos. The template for this is available on the Council's intranet and Shropshire Learning Gateway.

Records

- The Asbestos Register records the location of known asbestos, removed asbestos and non asbestos materials. The Register is usually kept in Reception.

Asbestos Basics

- ACMs which are in good condition and not disturbed, do not pose a risk to your health.
- Asbestos becomes dangerous when disturbed by smashing, drilling, sandpapering or sawing, etc. because very fine asbestos fibres float in the air which may be breathed in.

Where is the Asbestos?

- It's in most buildings except those more recently built. If the building was built or refurbished after 2000 then it is unlikely that asbestos will be present and no further action is required.

Who is at Risk?

Anyone who uses your premises who may disturb or damage materials containing asbestos. Anyone who could breathe in asbestos fibres. In fact, anyone whose work involves drilling, sawing or cutting into the fabric of premises could potentially be at risk for example:

- Contractors (e.g. Heating and ventilation engineers, telecommunications engineers, computer installers, electricians etc.)
- Volunteers

- Caretakers
- Teachers
- Librarians
- Shift Leaders
- Handy/maintenance person
- **ANYONE!**

All of the above **MUST:**

1. Consult the Asbestos Register to check for the presence of ACMs in the area where they are about to work.
2. Sign the “*Shropshire Council – Site Declaration Management of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM’s) for Contractors/In-House Maintenance Personnel*” form. This blank form is available on page 8 and 9 of the Asbestos Management Premises Plan. Copies should be available, along with the Asbestos Register, at the location where contractors sign in. Signed copies should be kept on site.

If the area where they are about to work includes asbestos, a detailed assessment of whether the work will disturb it will be required. In this case, please contact the Statutory Compliance Officer or H&S Team – see contact details below.

Training

All Council staff will receive appropriate asbestos awareness training for the level of competence required for them to discharge their duties.

- Anyone likely to disturb or manage asbestos in their day to day role e.g. premise managers, maintenance and caretaking staff must receive asbestos awareness training. Free awareness training sessions are available through the Health & Safety Team. These are bookable via the ERP Course Catalogue.
- Managers must make staff aware of where ACMs are within their work area.
- Managers must brief those staff with responsibility for signing in contractors, so they know to present Contractors with the Asbestos Register and ensure the form mentioned above is signed.

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

See page 6 of the Asbestos Management Premises Plan.

If the system fails and you think asbestos has been disturbed –

- Stop the work immediately, clear the immediate area to enable all doors to be closed and locked around the area.
- Close the windows and switch off any local ventilation. Leave all contaminated material in the area and display a notice to prevent access.
- Make a list of any persons who may have been exposed.
- Contact one of the following as soon as possible:
 1. G.Curley, Statutory Compliance Officer Asbestos & Legionella - **01743 253157**, or
 2. Health and Safety Duty Officer - **01743 252819**, or
 3. if out of normal office hours, PSG out of hours number - **07990 087815**.