



**THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BIRMINGHAM**

**Health and Safety Policy**  
**Asbestos**

**UHSP/14/ASB/04**

This document sets out in more detail the arrangements for compliance with University Health and Safety Policy at Budget Centre level and it gives guidance on how these requirements may be met. This document forms a part of the University Health and Safety Policy. It has been approved by the Environment, Health and Safety Executive Committee, in consultation with the Joint Safety Advisory Committee, and it will be subject to review.

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# Asbestos

UHSP/14/ASB/04

## INTRODUCTION

### Aim of the Policy

The Policy is aimed at preventing the risk of ill health from the inhalation of asbestos fibres.

### Introduction to the Policy

Until the mid 1980's asbestos was widely used by the construction industry. Many of the University buildings contain asbestos. It is found mainly:

- on or between walls as heat and noise insulation
- on the inside of ducting as noise insulation
- on pipes, tanks etc. as heat insulation
- on metal beams as fire protection
- as pipes, tanks guttering, soffits, fascias etc
- as panels on walls and roofs and as covers over ducts
- as tiles, usually ceiling tiles
- as roofing
- as loft insulation
- as decorative features
- as pipe chases and ducting
- in fire doors

Asbestos has also been used in equipment and material, typically as:

- seals around oven doors
- heat resistant mats
- fire blankets
- tapes
- brake linings
- mats
- tripod gauzes
- gloves
- quilts
- gaskets
- in heaters
- in fume cupboards

Asbestos can be found in many forms typically as:

- a sprayed on coating
- cement
- pressed board
- insulating board
- lagging
- felt
- string, rope and yarn
- paper and millboard
- cloth;
- tiles and slate
- mats
- as asbestos-bitumen products
- pre-formed moulded products
- resin bonded products

Asbestos is no longer used in new work, except in some very specialised applications, being replaced by other materials, e.g. man made mineral fibre.

If asbestos material is undamaged it does not present any risk to health. There is only a health risk if fibres of asbestos are released and inhaled. For this to happen the asbestos material must be damaged and fibres must become airborne, e.g. by being rubbed or being in a strong air current.

The removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials is strictly controlled by legislation. Licensed contractors must carry out asbestos stripping. Asbestos waste is classified as *special waste* and must only be removed from University premises by licensed carriers and in accordance with University Policy for Special Waste Disposal.

## Management of asbestos

Legislation places an explicit duty on the University to manage the risk from asbestos. This includes:

- taking reasonable steps to determine the location and condition of materials likely to contain asbestos;
- presuming materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not;
- making and keeping an up-to-date record of the location and condition of asbestos containing and presumed asbestos-containing materials;
- assessing the risk of the likelihood of anyone being exposed to fibres from asbestos containing materials;
- preparing a plan setting out how the risks from the materials are to be managed;
- periodically reviewing and monitoring the plan;
- providing information on the location and condition of asbestos containing materials to anyone who is likely to work on, or otherwise disturb them.

## Scope of the Policy

This policy and guidance sets out the University's arrangements for managing asbestos.

The majority of asbestos will be associated with the University's buildings and infrastructure and the Office of Estate Management is responsible for managing this asbestos. However some Budget Centres will have equipment made of, or containing, asbestos and the respective Budget Centres are responsible for managing this asbestos.

University Regulations expressly forbid interference with any of the University engineering services or with the fabric of buildings without express permission from the Director of Estate Management. Equally financial rules require that any procurement of goods and services, which involves any modification of, or attachments to, the fabric of a building will be subject to the control of the Director of Estate Management.

The Office of Estate Management is required to keep a register of all asbestos and presumed asbestos containing materials, including that which is the responsibility of other Budget Centres.

## Further information and advice

Initial queries concerning the identification and/or removal of asbestos should be made through the Office of Estate Management's maintenance line, telephone 46412. Further information about the policy can be obtained from the Health and Safety Unit, telephone 47564, e-mail [healthandsafety@bham.ac.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@bham.ac.uk).

## Definitions

**Safe asbestos** is asbestos that due to its condition and/or location does not present a risk to health.

**Unsafe asbestos** is asbestos that due to its condition and/or location may present a risk to health.

Whether asbestos is *safe* or *unsafe* is determined by risk assessment.

# POLICY

## The Director of Estate Management must make arrangements to:

### ***Prohibition on the use of asbestos***

- ensure no new asbestos or materials containing asbestos are used in the fabric of the University's buildings or infrastructure;

### ***Identification and recording of the presence of asbestos***

- identify and record asbestos associated with the fabric of the University's buildings and infrastructure;
- have a procedure for formally identifying material that could be made of or contain asbestos and to take the appropriate action;
- maintain an up to date record of the location and condition of the asbestos identified;
- record the verified presence of asbestos notified to the Office of Estate Management by Heads of Budget Centres;

### ***Marking of asbestos***

- mark as appropriate asbestos or potential asbestos identified;

### ***Removal or making asbestos safe***

- remove or make safe any asbestos identified that is ***unsafe***;

### ***Monitoring the condition of asbestos***

- regularly monitor the condition of any asbestos that is considered safe to ensure it does not become ***unsafe*** and to remove or repair it if it does;

### ***Disposal of asbestos***

- dispose of all asbestos under their control in accordance with University Policy for Special Waste disposal;

### ***Information and training***

- ensure that appropriate Office of Estate Management staff are trained to identify possible asbestos material, the possible locations of asbestos and the action to take if it is found;
- liaise with other budget centres who may need assistance with the identification of asbestos and material containing asbestos.

## Heads of Budget Centres must make arrangements in areas under their control to:

### ***Prohibition on the use of asbestos***

- ensure no new equipment containing asbestos is purchased and/or used unless there is exceptional justification for doing so - the Health and Safety Unit must be consulted before any purchase is made or any application started;

### ***Identification and recording of the presence of asbestos***

- identify, where possible, all equipment made of or containing asbestos;

### ***Removal of asbestos***

- remove, wherever practicable, any asbestos identified and dispose of it in accordance with University Policy for Special Waste disposal;

### ***If asbestos cannot be removed***

- ensure where it is not practicable to remove asbestos that it is maintained in a condition that is ***safe*** and to notify Office of Estate Management of its presence and any action taken;

### ***Training***

- ensure that appropriate Budget Centre staff are trained to identify possible asbestos material, the possible locations of asbestos and the action to take if it is found;

***Construction of, or alteration or maintenance to a building***

- Seek the permission of the Director of Estate Management before construction, alteration or maintenance is carried out on a building and in particular seek information from the record of asbestos.

**The Health and Safety Unit will:**

- provide advice to Heads of Budget Centres if they are considering using new asbestos or equipment containing asbestos;
- maintain appropriate health records;
- give advice to individuals on matters relating to asbestos.

**Individuals must:**

- co-operate in the implementation of this policy;
- bring to the attention of their Head of Budget Centre any known or potential locations of asbestos.

# GUIDANCE

## University Buildings and Infrastructure

The Office of Estate Management will have most dealings with asbestos in the University's buildings and infrastructure. However other Budget Centres may have or acquire information about asbestos or work where there is or may be asbestos present. It is essential that there is liaison between Budget Centres and the Office of Estate Management.

### Identification

The identification of asbestos in the University's buildings and infrastructure will be organised by the Office of Estate Management.

It will not be possible to guarantee that all the asbestos present will be identified. Caution should be exercised when building or maintenance work is carried out in case asbestos that has not been identified is present.

### Marking of asbestos

- For asbestos which is away from public view, e.g. in a plant room, steam pipes in subways, boilers etc. the marking can be clear and obvious on the asbestos itself.
- For asbestos which is in the public view; e.g. wall or ceiling panels, pipes in corridors etc. the markings should be discreet so as not to arouse unnecessary concern.

Discretion should be used when marking asbestos.

### Example of sign to be used

Yellow triangle edged in black with a black exclamation sign

Red circle and diagonal line with white background



Black lettering on yellow background

White lettering on red background

### Asbestos records

A register of all known asbestos and its condition will be kept, updated and amended by the Office of Estate Management. Amendments will include noting when the condition of the asbestos was last inspected or when it was removed. Co-operation will be required from all Estate Management and Budget Centre staff to ensure the Asbestos Register is up to date. The Asbestos Register should be consulted before construction or maintenance work takes place.

### Determining whether asbestos should be removed, repaired or left in situ

Each case should be determined by risk assessment, but the following general rules should be applied.

*Asbestos should be removed:*

- if it is damaged and its repair is not practicable;
- if it is damaged and/or is in a location where damage is likely to occur, e.g. at low level in a corridor, around doorways where work is being carried out nearby etc.;
- when refurbishment takes place.

*Asbestos may be made safe if:*

- the damage is minor and not in a location where it will regularly occur, e.g. pipes in a plant room.

*Asbestos may be left in situ if:*

- it is *safe* and so is not a risk to health.

## **Working in an area near to asbestos containing materials**

If there is a risk of the asbestos being damaged when work is carried out near to asbestos containing materials the asbestos will need to be removed or protected prior to work commencing. If damage does occur arrangements should be in place to report the incident and make safe the area.

## **Unexpected finding of asbestos**

When carrying out or supervising work, staff should be aware of the possibility of unexpectedly finding asbestos. They should be aware of the procedure to follow in such an event.

## **Removal, repair and disposal of asbestos**

All removal, repair and disposal of asbestos will be carried out under the control of the Office of Estate Management.

## **Budget Centre Equipment** (See flow chart in Appendix)

*Note Initial queries concerning the identification and/or removal of asbestos should be made through the Office of Estate Management's maintenance line, telephone 46412.*

## **Identifying asbestos**

Some items of equipment, particularly those found in laboratories may be made of or contain asbestos. By experience and knowledge staff will know many pieces of equipment that do contain asbestos. If there is any doubt the Office of Estate Management should be contacted to arrange for material to be tested to verify if it is asbestos or advice sought from the Health and Safety Unit.

## **Removing and disposing of asbestos**

It is advised that any equipment made wholly of asbestos (e.g. gloves, mats etc.) is disposed of whether or not it is in good condition. Wherever possible, any equipment containing asbestos (e.g. oven seals, furnaces etc.) should either have the asbestos removed and replaced by another material, if practicable, or the equipment disposed of. Arrangements for the removal and disposal of asbestos should be made through the Office of Estate Management. The Asbestos Policy requires that any arrangements for disposal must be made in accordance with University Policy for Special Waste disposal.

## **Cases where the removal of asbestos is not practicable**

In some cases the removal of asbestos may not be practicable. In such cases it may be left if it is in good condition or, if possible, repaired if damaged. It is advised that arrangements for repairs should be made through the Office of Estate Management. Any equipment containing asbestos should be clearly marked.

## **Notification**

The Asbestos Policy requires Budget Centres to notify the Office of Estate Management of any material that they know or suspect is asbestos or contains asbestos. Initial queries concerning the identification and/or removal of asbestos should be made through the Office of Estate Management's maintenance line, telephone 46412.

## **Training**

Appropriate training to identify asbestos is required for staff who:

- are likely to be involved with work or the supervision of work on the fabric and infrastructure of the University;
- manage laboratories and workshops and other locations where asbestos may be present.



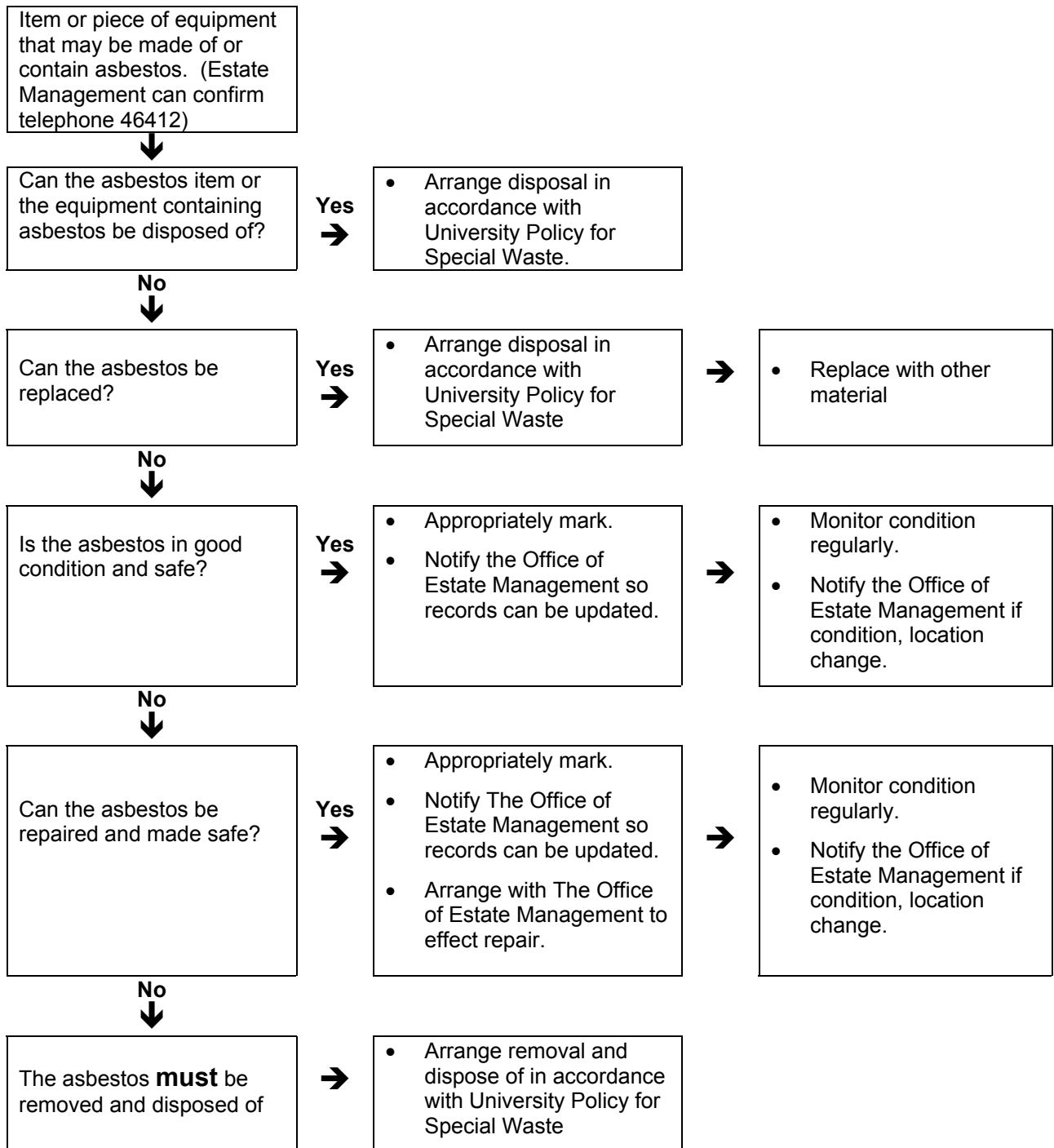
Training for staff in the Office of Estate Management will be organised by that office. The Health and Safety Unit can advise on training for all other staff.

## **Advice**

Anyone concerned about possible exposure to asbestos should contact the Health and Safety Unit. The Occupational Health staff in the Health and Safety Unit should be consulted for the health effects of exposure to asbestos.

# APPENDIX

## Budget Centres' Actions for Dealing With Their Equipment



**Note** Initial queries concerning the identification and/or removal of asbestos should be made through the Office of Estate Management Maintenance Line, 46412.