

recommended that it be left alone and periodic surveillance performed to monitor its condition. It's only when asbestos containing materials are disturbed or the materials become damaged that they become a hazard, and ultimately regulated asbestos-containing materials. When the materials become damaged, the fibers separate and may then become airborne. In the asbestos industry, the term 'friable' is used to describe asbestos that can be reduced to dust by hand pressure. 'Non-friable' means asbestos that is too hard to be reduced to dust by hand. Non-friable materials, such as transite siding and floor tiles are not regulated by the State provided it does not become damaged and friable. Machine grinding, sanding and dry-buffing are some ways of causing non-friable materials to become friable.

4. How are asbestos-containing materials maintained?

Friable asbestos can be maintained in place utilizing several techniques. Encapsulation involves applying a thick layer of an encapsulant, much like latex paint, that binds the surface of the material together and prevents the material from becoming airborne. Encapsulation and routine monitoring are not always enough to prevent damage. When damage occurs, removal may be the best option.

5. When is it necessary to remove asbestos-containing materials?

There is no law that says asbestos has to be removed. It is only when the material can no longer be maintained in good condition and/or has been damaged, or when the building is to be demolished or renovated, that removal may become the only option.

In the State of Oklahoma, asbestos may only be removed by Licensed Asbestos Abatement Contractors, utilizing Licensed Workers and Supervisors. Oklahoma has always been at the forefront of regulating the removal of asbestos containing materials and all projects are inspected by inspectors from the Oklahoma Department of Labor a minimum of three times (Oklahoma's regulations, however, do not apply to private residences or multi-family residences of less than six (6) units or any Federal Property.)

6. When is it required to have a building inspection or survey?

There are Federal Regulations that require all building materials that have not been tested to be presumed to contain asbestos. Only inspection and sampling may rebut the required presumption.

Any building owner who is renovating or demolishing a building is required by Federal law to have their buildings inspected for asbestos containing materials. Buildings are not permitted to be demolished if there is friable asbestos present. Also, public and private schools, K-12, are required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), to be inspected and have a management plan prepared, which is to be maintained and available for public inspection.

7. How is asbestos removed?

When removal is planned, a licensed Asbestos Contractor must notify the state Labor Department and the state Department of Environmental Quality ten days in advance of removal. Most projects, are required to have a project design, that details how the contractor will perform the removal. All project designs must be approved by the Oklahoma Department of Labor.

Upon approval from ODOL, workers construct a containment, sealing all possible entries and exits to prevent air from escaping from containment. Containments are maintained under negative pressure and the air is exhausted through special filters that make sure the air exhausted safely. A decontamination unit is built on to the containment, where workers change into disposable suits and respirators upon entering the containment, and shower out before exiting the containment, so as not to contaminate the area outside the containment by tracking out asbestos on their clothes or body. Once the containment is approved by ODOL,