

# MANAGEMENT OF ASBESTOS

## *"the hidden killer with clear liabilities"*

*There has been much controversy in the press recently regarding new regulations on the duty to manage asbestos, which are due to come into force in July 2002.*

*There have also been recent court cases that have made it easier for asbestosis sufferers and their dependents to claim compensation from previous employers.*

The new Regulation is not intended to enforce the removal of asbestos containing material (ACM's) but seeks to greatly reduce the risk to employees, building occupiers and maintenance workers from exposure to asbestos fibres by ongoing assessment and management.

This regulation will require property management companies, building owners and building occupiers, etc to develop and maintain an asbestos register for each property. The register should detail the presence, type, and condition of any ACM and provide a risk assessment relative to each ACM. A requirement for an asbestos survey will also exist for property developers where the demolition of existing buildings is required prior to redevelopment.

The current UK guidance outlines three types of survey, Type 1, 2 & 3, one or more of which may be required for a site.

A Type 1 (Presumptive) survey is used to determine, by visual inspection, the location and condition of any ACM's associated with a building, but defers the necessity to sample and analyse for asbestos. Any risk assessments carried out can only therefore be based on assumptions that suspected materials may contain asbestos and without confirmatory sampling additional management costs may be incurred. Access to all areas of the buildings are sought, including service risers, roof space etc. Any areas that cannot be accessed may be considered to potentially include ACM's.

A Type 2 (Sampling) survey follows the same procedures as the Type 1 survey above, but representative samples of suspected ACM's are collected to prove or disprove the surveyors assumptions. This therefore allows a more definitive risk assessment to be carried out. Type 1 and 2 surveys maybe undertaken simultaneously if the size of the site allows.

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A Type 3 (Pre-demolition/refurbishment) survey is required to sample and identify, as far as is reasonably practicable, all ACMs within a site, and therefore may involve some destruction of the building fabric to gain access to all areas. The survey is used to estimate the quantity of asbestos present prior to removal. It does not therefore contain an assessment of the condition of the asbestos present.



*Photo showing broken cladding of "Asbestos Containing Material"*

Asbestos surveys should only be undertaken by personnel qualified to BIOH (British Institute of Occupational Hygiene) P402 "Building Surveys and Bulk Sampling for Asbestos" and have direct experience of the assessment for asbestos containing materials.

If your buildings do not have adequate Asbestos Registers, it may be appropriate to consider commissioning surveys to protect the health of your employees and others and to reduce liabilities, particularly from civil claims.

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