

Q. I sometimes notice an odor while an abatement project is underway. Is this hazardous to me or other building occupants?

A. No. Friable asbestos projects are done with wet methods to minimize the amount of fibers that can become airborne. Odors can occur when surfacing materials are wetted, similar to the odor of wet drywall or carpeting. Other odors can be created when certain solvents are used to remove ACM. For example, solvents are used to remove mastics. Low-odor, low-toxicity solvents are used that are similar to wood or cutting oils. In the unlikely event that you suffer symptoms that you associate with the odors of an abatement project, report the situation to your supervisor. FMP will work with the abatement contractor to minimize odors. Do not open windows to the outside, as it may increase the odor in your area.

Q. Following removal of floor tiles and mastics, a waiting period of 10 days may be imposed before new flooring material is installed. Why is this waiting period necessary?

A. The solvents used to remove mastics have a tendency to off-gas when mixed with the mastic. The 10 day period of time allows for the off-gassing process to conclude so that odor problems do not occur after the new flooring is installed. In addition, most flooring installation contractors will not guarantee their work if this time period is not observed because of the potential for the residual solvent to interfere with the new mastic adhesion properties.

Q. What makes a floor tile or floor tile adhesive project different from other asbestos projects?

A. Floor tile and floor tile adhesives are non-friable, therefore these projects do not require construction of a regulated area. Methods such as dry ice, water, solvent, or heat are used to remove tile and adhesive. However, floor tiles and mastics can become friable if proper removal methods are not used that protect the integrity of the tiles. Therefore, never break, sand, abrade, drill, or use other damaging procedures on floor tiles or mastics.

Q. Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns?

A. Concerns can be communicated to Facilities Management and Planning Help Desk (2-1550) or Environmental Health and Safety (2-4925).



Asbestos Project Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Occasionally, you may be working in a building where there is an asbestos project in progress involving the removal (abatement), repair, renovation or demolition of asbestos containing materials (ACM). Projects involving **friable** ACM (i.e., ceiling texture, thermal pipe insulation, fireproofing, etc.) must be conducted in a regulated area. However, projects involving **non-friable** ACM (i.e., floor tiles, mastics, etc.) are not generally conducted in a regulated area because asbestos fibers do not become airborne.

As a building occupant, you are not allowed to enter or work in a regulated area in order to protect yourself and others from a potential exposure to asbestos. The following FAQs will help you to understand various projects and what to expect.

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Q. What is ACM?

A. ACM is defined as any material containing more than one percent asbestos. ACM is classified as friable or non-friable. Friable ACM is defined as material that may be crumbled, pulverized, or reduced to powder by hand pressure when dry thereby releasing asbestos fibers that may become airborne. Non-friable ACM does not readily release asbestos fibers from its matrix.

Q. Who conducts ACM projects in UNL buildings?

A. At UNL, only licensed, professional asbestos abatement contractors conduct friable asbestos projects. The State of Nebraska, Department of Health and Human Services - Regulation and Licensure requires all abatement contractors and workers to attend training and demonstrate competency through testing. A UNL Facilities Management and Planning employee will be assigned to each abatement project to serve as the project manager. In addition, through a notification process, the State is aware of all regulated asbestos projects and inspects them on a periodic basis.

Q. What is a regulated area?

A. A regulated area is a well-defined and marked zone where friable asbestos work (removal, repair, demolition, renovation) occurs. A regulated area is physically and mechanically separated from other areas of the building to prevent asbestos fibers from leaving the work zone. Never enter a regulated area.

Q. Why is plastic sheeting hung in regulated areas?

A. Plastic sheeting, in several layers, is used to physically separate the work zone from adjacent areas.

Q. What is the air exhaust coming from the room where there is an asbestos project?

A. Local, portable exhaust units equipped with HEPA filters are used to mechanically separate the

work zone from adjacent areas. These units create a negative air pressure between the work zone and adjacent areas by drawing air from outside of the work zone. After air has moved into the regulated area it passes through a HEPA filter to remove asbestos fibers before the air is exhausted.

Q. What differences will I notice in a non-regulated area while the work is being performed?

A. When the project is not regulated, a sign may be hung at the entrance of the work area to remind workers to take proper protection before entering the work area and to help keep others out while work is in progress. Plastic sheeting may be hung to help keep the area around the project clean, but is not needed as a barrier. Exhaust air units or fans may also be present to assist with odor control. These units are not “cleaning” the air because the project involves non-friable ACM that does not readily release asbestos fibers.

Q. What other important functions do exhaust fans/ units perform?

A. To maintain odor control and directional airflow, the building HVAC system may be adjusted. It is important that building occupants refrain from activities and actions that can overcome these adjustments. For example, do not open windows, prop open doors, engage exhaust fans that do not normally operate, etc. These actions could lead to reintroduction of odors into occupied areas.

Q. Why is there a large sign posted by a regulated area indicating there is a lung cancer hazard?

A. This is a warning for asbestos workers to take proper protection before entering a regulated work area because of the potential for airborne asbestos fibers.

Q. I noticed when workers come out of a regulated they are in street clothes. Why is this?

A. In a regulated area there are separate areas for showering and garment change to protect the workers from exposure and prevent “carrying” asbestos fibers to the outer environment.

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