

## Asbestos Exposure Process

### Possible Accidental Exposure to Airborne Asbestos Fibres

Following any incident where there has been potential unprotected (e.g. no Respiratory Protective Equipment 'RPE' being worn) exposure to airborne asbestos fibres, the following action **must** be taken:-

#### Practical Actions

- Stop work immediately in a safe and orderly manner.
- Isolate the area affected by preventing access to the damaged asbestos source together with the appropriate communication for anyone who could be affected.
- Contact Building Services to arrange for fibre monitoring and potential decontamination.
- Works and access must not resume until a competent person has authorised that it is safe to do so.

In addition to these practical actions, local and external reporting must also take place as detailed below and compliance with the 'Suspected ACM Disturbance/Exposure Process' Flow Chart must be followed in all circumstances.

### Reporting Procedures Following a Potential Exposure

#### Local Reporting

- Complete an incident report using the Corporate Safety Advice online reporting system. (Further details on incident reporting procedures are given within the corporate safety manual, *Safety Policy & Arrangements – 'Accident, Near Miss & Ill Health Reporting'*.)
- Corporate Safety Advice will Inform the senior management of the incident and local management will be required to identify all potentially affected colleagues.
- It will not generally be necessary for the employee to be examined medically. They should however notify their GP of their possible accidental exposure to asbestos fibres so that any future medical symptoms can be viewed in their proper context. The manager must also notify Employee Wellbeing team to update their records in relation to any employee who may have been exposed.

#### Medical Reporting

Following the report of potential exposure to asbestos, Corporate Safety Advice will forward a copy of the following 2 documents to the senior management of all potentially affected colleagues, along with full instructions for dissemination:-

- Potential Exposure to Asbestos Recording Form.
- Accompanying letter

#### Investigation

A local investigation must be carried out by the Duty Holder and recorded on the Corporate Safety Advice online incident reporting system.

In addition to the local investigation, Corporate Safety Advice and Building will review the incident to identify if there are any lessons to be learned.

## RIDDOR Reporting and Notifying the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

In certain cases, potential exposure to asbestos will need to be reported to HSE by the management of colleagues potentially exposed.

The following guidance has been taken directly from the HSE Website [Asbestos frequently asked questions](#):-

Exposure to asbestos is reportable under RIDDOR when a work activity causes the accidental release or escape of asbestos fibres into the air in a quantity sufficient to cause damage to the health of any person.

Such situations are likely to arise when work is carried out without suitable controls, or where those controls fail.

They often involve:

- Use of power tools (to drill, cut etc.) on most ACMs
- Work that leads to physical disturbance (knocking, breaking, smashing) of an ACM that should only be handled by a licensed contractor eg. sprayed coating, lagging, asbestos insulating board (AIB)
- Manually cutting or drilling AIB
- Work involving aggressive physical disturbance of asbestos cement eg. breaking or smashing
- If these activities are carried out without suitable controls, or the precautions fail to control exposure, these would be classed as a 'dangerous occurrence' under RIDDOR and should be reported.

If in any doubt persists regarding the requirement to report to the HSE, contact Corporate Safety Advice or the investigating manager for additional information and support

