

## **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR SCHOOLS**

Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) in 1986. AHERA requires that all of the nation's nonprofit elementary and secondary schools, both public and private, inspect their school buildings for asbestos-containing building material (ACBM), develop a plan to manage the asbestos for each school building, notify parents and staff regarding management plan availability, provide asbestos awareness training to school maintenance and custodial workers, and other requirements described under AHERA regulations. The governing authority responsible for AHERA compliance is the Local Education Agency (LEA).

### **Is the school district required to do anything about asbestos in its school buildings?**

Yes. AHERA requires public school districts and non-profit private schools to inspect their schools for ACBM and prepare management plans, which recommend the best way to reduce the hazard from any asbestos-containing materials that may be present. Options include repairing damaged asbestos-containing material (such as spraying it with sealants, enclosing it) or removing it. The plans must be developed by accredited management planners and submitted to the State. The school authority must notify parent, teacher and employee organizations of the plans, and then the plans must be implemented. The school district must also perform periodic surveillance of asbestos-containing material every 6 months in its schools. AHERA also requires accreditation of abatement project designers, abatement workers, supervisors, and building inspectors.

### **My child's school has asbestos in it. Why aren't they taking it out?**

LEAs (e.g., school districts) are required under AHERA to inspect for and manage asbestos containing materials properly through the development and implementation of an asbestos management plan. LEA can safely and effectively "manage in place" asbestos-containing materials that are in good condition. The risk from asbestos is when it is damaged and/or disturbed and asbestos fibers become airborne where they can be inhaled. If the local education agency does perform a "response action" or an asbestos abatement, they must use properly trained and accredited asbestos professionals to do this work. LEAs are required to undertake timely and appropriate maintenance or response actions whenever asbestos containing materials become friable.

### **What is Asbestos Management Plan?**

An Asbestos Management Plan is required to provide documentation of the recommended asbestos response actions, the location of asbestos within the school, and any action taken to repair or remove the material. The school authority must maintain records to be included in the Asbestos Management Plan. These records include among other things:

- List of the name and address of each school building and whether the building has asbestos containing building material, and the type of asbestos-containing material.
- Date of the original and each subsequent school re-inspection.
- The plan for re-inspections, and operation and maintenance.
- A blueprint that clearly identifies the location and condition of all asbestos-containing building material that remains in the school.

- A description of any response action or preventive measures taken to eliminate or control asbestos exposure.
- A copy of the analysis of any building material, and the name and address of any laboratory that sampled the material.
- The name, address, and telephone number of the “designated person” to ensure the duties of the LEA are carried out.
- A description of steps taken to inform workers, teachers, and students or their legal guardians about inspections, re-inspections, response actions, and periodic surveillance.

### **Is it dangerous to have asbestos containing material in my school?**

Not necessarily. Undamaged asbestos that is properly managed in place poses little health risk to students, teachers and other school occupants. However, it is important that the proper school designated authorities regularly inspect the condition of asbestos-containing materials to ensure they remain intact. Asbestos can pose a health hazard when it is disturbed and asbestos fibers become airborne where they can be inhaled. Undamaged non-friable asbestos is best left undisturbed and managed in place. If done improperly, removing asbestos has the potential to create a greater health risk than leaving it undisturbed.

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