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4.1 Pipe Insulation

Most pipe insulation installed prior to 1972 contains asbestos. Generally maintenance and/or replacement of insulated pipes requires removal of the asbestos covering. To minimize the release of asbestos fibers into the air and decrease potential employee exposure, the following work practices must be followed:

- 4.1.1 All employees removing asbestos pipe insulation must wear approved respirators and special clothing. This is not only a good work practice, it is a requirement of OSHA regulation 29CFR 1910.1001 (C)(2)(iii). Contact Industrial Hygiene and Toxicology for information on approved respirators.
- 4.1.2 OSHA regulation 1910.1001 contains explicit requirements and work practices which must be followed when the potential for asbestos exposure can occur. The regulation provides details on: respirator programs, change rooms and clothes lockers, area and personal sampling requirements, caution signs and labels, house-keeping, waste disposal, medical recordkeeping and medical examinations. This regulation must be consulted and followed.
- 4.1.3 Isolate the repair area to keep other employees as far as possible from the repair operation. The surfaces to be repaired must be wetted down where possible or treated with commercially available dust suppressant to control dispersion of asbestos fibers. Wet methods of dust suppression are most effective in controlling exposure to airborne fibers.
- 4.1.4 Place plastic sheeting on the floor beneath the repair site so that all pieces of insulation, however small, can be collected when finished. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic can redisperse asbestos into the air if pieces are left on the floor. Pieces of equipment, structures, etc., which are covered with friable asbestos material must be wetted down and must not be thrown or dropped during removal.
- 4.1.5 If it is necessary to sweep the asbestos, the floor must be wetted down to keep the fibers from becoming airborne. Approved vacuum cleaners must be used to clean the floor of any remaining dried asbestos dust and small pieces of material. Industrial Hygiene and Toxicology can recommend approved, highly efficient vacuum cleaners.
- 4.1.6 All waste, scrap, and debris, as well as asbestos-contaminated clothing, must be wetted and placed in sealed, impermeable bags or containers for proper disposal. No asbestos-containing insulation should be placed in open trash containers or dumpsters. All waste material containing asbestos or containers into which waste is placed for disposal must be labeled in accordance with OSHA Standard 1910.1001 (G)(2)(ii)(II). See Section 4.4.6 for disposal requirements.
- 4.1.7 Because asbestos fiber can be dispersed throughout adjacent areas by ventilation systems, air-supply fans in the vicinity of asbestos removal projects should be turned off; exhaust fans should be left on (unless these fans are part of an air recirculation system) to keep the area under negative pressure. Any grinding or cutting of asbestos containing material must be done with local exhaust ventilation which conforms to OSHA Standard 1910.1001.

* If more than three years old, see Manual Index for latest review date.

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