Decision-Making:

- It is difficult to develop a set of rules that can be uniformly applied to every asbestos control situation. Local conditions make each situation unique. However, organizing and analyzing information on (1) the condition and potential for disturbing the asbestos-containing materials, and (2) the advantages and disadvantages of control alternatives will help in selecting an effective course of action.

3.1 Inspecting, Sampling, and Analyzing for Asbestos

As discussed in Chapter 2, the first task in an asbestos control plan is to determine whether or not asbestos is present. This involves investigating building records for mention of asbestos-containing materials, inspecting the building for friable materials, and analyzing samples of friable material for asbestos. Figure 4 illustrates a logical sequence of steps for this task. First, investigate building plans, remodeling records, and other sources (such as personal knowledge) for specification of asbestos-containing materials. Information on the type and location of asbestos-containing materials will help focus the next step—inspecting for friable materials in the building. A building inspection might start with those areas where asbestos-containing materials are reported to be present and then expand to all parts of the building. If friable materials are found, they should be sampled and analyzed as discussed below.* If the presence of asbestos in the friable materials is confirmed (more than 1 percent by weight), then the assessment for corrective action is begun. If, on the other hand, no friable materials are found—or if they are found, but do not contain asbestos—document these results. A formal statement of these findings (called "negative certification" in Figure 4) is required for schools. If the investigation of building records or the building inspection indicates that nonfriable asbestos-containing materials are present, these materials should be reinspected periodically for changes in their condition.† Reinspection is especially important for friable materials that have been painted or covered with a hard wrapping (and would thus be classified "nonfriable"), such as pipe and boiler insulation. Damage or slow deterioration of the wrapping or paint could cause significant release of asbestos fibers, thus requiring a detailed assessment of the need for corrective action.

To further clarify the types of materials to be investigated in an asbestos control program, a chart showing asbestos-containing materials found in buildings is presented in Figure 5. The first level is based on the most important characteristic—friability. Materials which are friable and contain asbestos are likely to be sprayed or troweled onto surfaces in either fibrous or cementitious form. Nonfriable asbestos-containing materials are more diverse. As noted above, asbestos insulation on pipes and boilers is of special concern. Pipes and boilers are usually accessible to building occupants (especially custodial workers) and often are prone to damage. Pipe and boiler insulation may look like chalk, bricks, mud, or corrugated cardboard. Often these insulation materials are enclosed in a canvas, stainless steel, or plastic jacket. The boiler wrapping and pipe jackets should be carefully inspected for damage that could allow release of asbestos fibers. Other nonfriable asbestos-containing materials normally are hazardous only when cut, drilled, sanded, or removed during remodeling or demolition. Note, again, that nonfriable pipe and boiler insulation should be considered friable when damaged. Examples of friable and nonfriable asbestos-containing materials were shown in Figure 3. Figure 13 shows pictures of damaged and deteriorating pipe insulation.

*The Asbestos-in-Schools rule allows schools to skip the sampling and analysis steps and simply assume that any friable materials found in the building contain asbestos. The location of all friable materials must be documented and all affected parties, as described previously, must be notified.
†Inspection for nonfriable materials is not required by the Asbestos-in-Schools rule.

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