

ASBESTOS

Introduction

Maintenance and repair work on some of the Bell Laboratories plant facilities has necessitated that on occasion asbestos insulation on pipes, boilers, beams, etc., be manipulated or removed. To assure compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations:

1. All contractors or Bell Laboratories employees engaged in asbestos handling or removal must comply with EPA regulations as well as, those outlined in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Standard 29 CFR 1910.1001.
2. The Environmental Management Group of the Environmental Health, Environmental Management and Safety Center should be provided with the name of the disposal site.

OSHA Standard

The present OSHA asbestos standard is two asbestos fibers per cubic centimeter of air as an 8-hour Time Weighted Average (TWA). OSHA CPL2-2.21A requires that medical examinations be given employees who have asbestos exposures equal to or exceeding 0.1 fibers per cubic centimeter of air as an 8-hour TWA.

Handling Asbestos Containing Insulation

Before working with material that is thought to contain asbestos, the material must be analyzed to determine if it in fact does contain asbestos. It is not possible by visual inspection to ascertain whether or not insulation contains asbestos. If insulation materials are to be analyzed, please contact the Environmental Health, Environmental Management and Safety Center, MH 26551, for instructions on the correct method of sampling.

The primary goal when handling asbestos containing materials is to minimize employee exposure. Insofar as possible, asbestos should be removed or otherwise worked in a wet state sufficient to prevent the emission of airborne fibers. For example, as layers of insulation are being removed, they should be sprayed or misted continually with water containing a suitable wetting agent.

Employees removing asbestos insulation or coverings must be provided with respiratory protection and with protective clothing. Generally, workers wear disposable coveralls including a hood. Use of respirators must conform to BTL Respiratory Protection Guidelines.

Caution signs must be provided and displayed at each location when airborne concentration of fibers may be in excess of exposure limits. Signs must be posted at such a distance from the location so that employees may read the sign and take necessary protective steps. Work areas should be roped off and signs posted to prevent inadvertent exposure to personnel not working in the area.

All work areas where asbestos is being manipulated should be enclosed within plastic drapes. Floors should also be covered. Upon completion of the work tasks, all enclosure materials should be removed and disposed of in accordance with the applicable regulations. Any asbestos containing wastes must contain caution labels that are affixed to the bag containing the waste.

After completion of all job tasks, work areas should be vacuumed with an approved vacuum cleaner containing a HEPA filter which will remove 99.97% of particles with a diameter of 0.3 micrometers or greater. An alternative to vacuuming is to wet mop the affected area.

Asbestos Removal by Outside Contractors

The Long Lines Legal Department has prepared an addendum which should be included in all contracts which directly or indirectly affect materials in workplaces that contain asbestos. The addendum is as follows:

The work specified in this contract will be performed in areas with asbestos which may present a hazard if fibers become airborne. Contractor shall take all steps necessary to comply with the regulations of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (29 CFR § 1910.1001, et seq.) regarding asbestos as they relate to contractor's employees and subcontractors, including, but not limited to, (1) the wearing of respirators by medically certified employees, (2) the wearing of protective clothing and the proper disposal of same, (3) monitoring, (4) the posting of applicable warning signs, (5) medical examinations, and (6) retention of records. Further, Contractor shall take such steps as are necessary to insure that Telephone Company's employees are not exposed to impermissible levels of asbestos fibers during the course of Contractor's work."

Disposal

Asbestos is not regulated by RCRA, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and may be disposed of in an approved sanitary landfill. The Environmental Management Group should be supplied with the name of landfills used for asbestos disposal. Call MH x4868.

Conclusions

The Environmental Health, Environmental Management and Safety Center is available to review contractor work practices and BTL work practices to insure compliance with all applicable regulations. This department is also available to monitor BTL employees who have a potential asbestos exposure or answer any asbestos related questions. Call MH x6551 for assistance.