

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS BULLETIN

DATE 8/22/83	BULLETIN TITLE Industrial Hygiene	RESPONSIBLE DEPT. Employee Health Services	BULLETIN NO. 4b
SUBJECT Asbestos Insulation Removal and Repair (Supplement to Bulletin No. 4)		SUPERVISOR New	DATED

Most boiler, furnace, steam, and condensate piping insulation installed prior to 1975 contains asbestos. The removal or maintenance of dry asbestos insulation can be very hazardous to health. Old asbestos-containing insulation tends to be dry, very friable, and can easily generate high concentrations of airborne fibers and dust if carelessly handled. Stringent industrial hygiene precautions must, therefore, be taken to protect employee health by preventing inhalation of asbestos dust and fibers.

The following procedures and steps are recommended to minimize dust exposures during asbestos-containing insulation demolition, removal, and repair. They supplement work practices, engineering controls, and personal protective equipment usage specified in Industrial Hygiene Bulletin No. 4 and in OSHA and Ontario OSHA asbestos standards and regulations. These procedures apply primarily to protection of pipe coverers and insulation maintenance and installation employees. Compliance with these procedures should assure that others in vicinity of insulation maintenance activities are not excessively exposed to airborne asbestos fibers. These industrial hygiene work practices focus on safe techniques for removing asbestos insulation from older equipment and buildings. They do not address asbestos encapsulation, top-coating, or enclosure methods.

1. Steam and hot water pipes, furnaces, boilers, ovens, and other equipment must not be reinsulated with asbestos-containing products including insulation cements, tape, and grout. Suppliers of acceptable substitute insulation for asbestos can be provided by Plant Engineering Office, Manufacturing Staff (Mechanical Design and Equipment Standards, page M4-1, January 1976).
2. Unless there is specific evidence to the contrary, all insulation should be treated and handled as if it is asbestos-containing until proven otherwise. Samples of insulation materials suspected of containing asbestos may be submitted to the Industrial Hygiene Laboratory who will return an analytical report of amounts and types of asbestos in the samples. Contact Industrial Hygiene at 33-78955 for sampling procedure and shipment method. A profile and map of asbestos-containing insulation in the plant can be established by a judicious sampling and boiler and steam pipe tagging procedure.
3. Removal of asbestos-containing insulation associated with renovation or demolition should be done by an outside contractor with proven experience in successfully handling this hazardous work in compliance with OSHA standards. The cost and/or inconvenience associated with utilization of a specialized contractor is justified by elimination of potential inhalation health risks. Any outside contracting should be consistent with the outside contracting clearance procedure provided for in the current Company-UAW agreement.
4. Insulation-handling areas must be posted and restricted to prevent unauthorized entry as specified in OSHA regulations.
5. The number of employees authorized to handle asbestos-containing insulation should be kept to a minimum. A designated crew, educated and trained in proper insulation-handling work practices, who understands OSHA asbestos regulations, and has reviewed this bulletin, is recommended. As far as feasible, work should be performed at a time when any inadvertent fugitive asbestos fiber emissions would expose fewest people in adjacent areas.
6. Insulation should not be removed, handled, or scored, sawed, or drilled until it has been thoroughly soaked with water. Wherever possible, steam flow should be interrupted to prevent wet insulation next to pipe from drying out during insulation

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