

Asbestos Management Plans

Why is an asbestos management plan required?

If you are responsible for managing non-domestic premises then you have a legal requirement (Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012) to identify and manage the risk from any asbestos which is liable to be present in your building. This is to prevent staff, contractors and visitors being exposed to airborne asbestos fibres.

Firstly you will need to determine the presence of asbestos which can be done by conducting an asbestos survey. If the survey shows asbestos is present or liable to be present in any area of the building then you will need to prepare a written plan that sets out in detail how you are going to manage any asbestos risks identified by the survey. This is called an asbestos management plan.

An asbestos management plan is a legal requirement for all workplaces liable to contain asbestos. It sets out what is going to be done, over what timescales and the methods to be used to manage any asbestos containing materials (ACMs). It also sets out clear lines of responsibility for the management of asbestos.

The plan is needed to ensure that:

- Any materials known or presumed to contain asbestos are kept in a good state of repair.
- If any materials are damaged, or their location presents a particular risk then the materials are repaired or removed as appropriate.
- There are clear lines of communication and everyone knows what their roles and responsibilities are for the management of asbestos.
- Information on the location and condition of the material is given to anyone potentially at risk.
- Processes are put in place to control and manage any maintenance or building works that may disturb asbestos. This includes making sure everyone is sufficiently trained.

What does an asbestos management plan contain?

Information contained within the survey report will form the basis from which to develop your asbestos management plan. The management plan should contain the following information:

Details of how the location and condition of asbestos materials is recorded:

An asbestos register will need to be compiled recording details of individual ACMs or presumed ACMs. Details required include:

- Type of asbestos materials
- Location (including accessibility)
- Quantity of materials
- Condition
- Material assessment

The information can be provided in a number of ways including hard copy, electronic format or alternatively via access to an electronic risk management system. It is up to you to determine which method suits your business the best. In deciding which system to use it is important to consider the ease with which the system can be updated and how easily accessible the information is to all those that may need it.

Priority assessments and prioritised actions

The information contained within the asbestos register should be used as the basis for conducting a risk assessment of each of the ACMs or presumed ACMs identified. This will help you decide the most appropriate course of action for dealing with the ACMs and decide the order of priority in which they should be tackled.

The risk assessment should include both a material and a priority assessment.

The material assessment looks at the type and condition of the ACM and the ease with which it will release fibres if it is disturbed. This is usually included in the survey report.

The priority assessment considers the likelihood of someone disturbing the ACM. Factors such as cleaning and maintenance and the nature of the activities undertaken by employees/occupants and visitors should all be taken into consideration.

Decisions about management options

Within the management plan each asbestos material will be treated individually and a decision made as to what management action will be required. Depending upon the results produced from the risk assessment one or more of the following options will be selected for each asbestos material:

- Label the material
- Colour code the material
- Protect/enclose the material
- Seal/encapsulate the material
- Repair the material
- Remove the material

Timescales for management actions

The management plan should contain target timescales in which the management actions should be completed. These will be set based on the priority and material risk assessments.

Monitoring arrangements

To reduce the risk of exposure you must be sure that all building materials liable to contain asbestos are kept in reasonable condition. The asbestos management plan must contain monitoring arrangements for the regular inspection of any ACMs. Asbestos re-inspections may be conducted by an outside survey company. These should usually be conducted annually or more frequently if there is reason to suspect that materials may have deteriorated or have become damaged.

Training arrangements for employees and contractors

You will need to ensure that anyone who may come into contact with or disturb asbestos during the normal course of their work has the correct level of asbestos knowledge and training required.

Asbestos awareness training should be sufficient for most staff. This will provide an understanding of the types, uses and likely occurrence of asbestos materials in a building, show how the risks from asbestos can be avoided and the actions that should be taken in an emergency.

More specialised training may be needed for managers and dutyholders who have specific responsibilities under the plan and for anyone required to carry out low risk non-licensed activities.

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Mechanisms for passing on information about the location and condition of asbestos materials to those who need it

Information concerning the location and the condition of asbestos materials must be passed on to any employees and contractors who are liable to come into contact with or disturb asbestos. Set processes for the communication of this information should be laid out in the plan.

Plans for implementation of new procedures

Systems and procedures need to be put in place to control any work on site and ensure that maintenance workers and contractors are not unknowingly exposed to airborne asbestos fibres. This is particularly important in larger organisations where it is difficult for one person to manage and communicate with all the contractors on site. A formal, written system of work incorporating permit-to-work may be required. This would allow you to control access to the premises and ensure that you know exactly which areas contractors are working in. Supplying this information well before the work starts allows contractors to take the relevant precautions.

Details of who will oversee the management plan

The plan must include details of the person(s) responsible for overseeing the management plan.

Procedures for review of the management plan, including timescales

The management plan should be reviewed regularly, to monitor the effectiveness of any set processes and procedures and measure progress against any set timescales. You may need to consider how effective the plan has been in terms of:

- Preventing exposure
- Highlighting the management actions required to deal with any ACMs
- Managing and controlling maintenance workers and contractors
- Raising awareness

You will also need to critically assess any situations where procedures have failed to be implemented correctly or where exposure to asbestos fibres has occurred.

The HSE recommend reviewing the plan thoroughly every twelve months. The plan may also need to be reviewed following changes to the organisational structure/staffing, resources, company procedures, refurbishment or changes in the use or occupancy of the building.

For more information please contact us on 020 7960 3939 or visit our website: www.metro-safety.co.uk

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