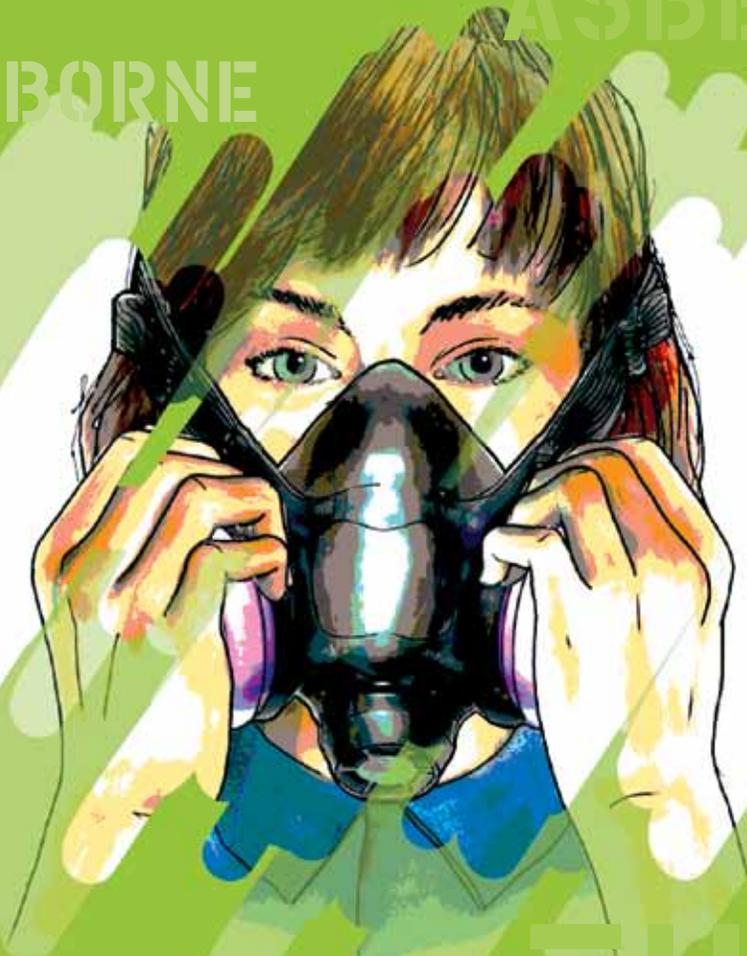


DISEASE

ASBESTOSIS

AIRBORNE



LUNG CANCER

TUMOUR

young workers:

keeping them safe from

exposure to asbestos

an employer's guide

WORK SAFE BC

WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

help them recognize hazards on the jobsite – and remember:

unseen dangers hurt, too!

Young construction workers face many hazards on the jobsite. Sometimes the hazards are obvious, such as a broken ladder or an unguarded opening. But sometimes young workers may not even see the dangers that can make them sick. While there are many exposure hazards on a construction site, this document focuses on asbestos fibres. Airborne asbestos fibres can present serious exposure risks that could affect the health of young workers today, tomorrow, or even decades down the road.

This document offers some strategies and resources to help you prevent your young and most vulnerable workers from becoming sick or dying from asbestos-related exposures.

WHY FOCUS ON YOUNG WORKERS?

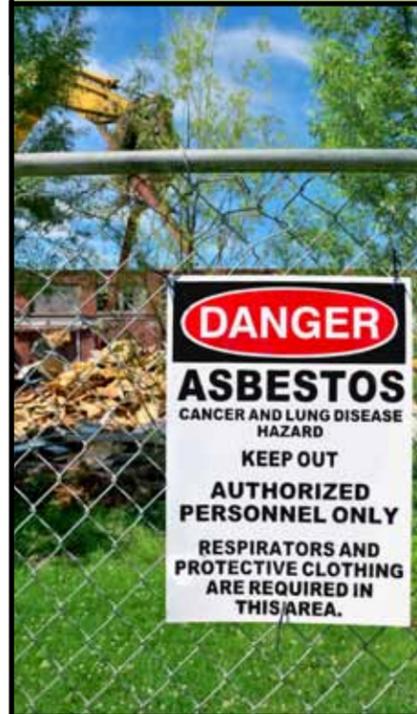
don't all workers need protection from asbestos exposure?

As an employer, you're required to ensure a healthy and safe workplace for all of your workers. But young workers have specific needs. Being both young and new to the jobsite, young workers may lack experience, knowledge of hazards, and a full understanding of the potentially long-term and sometimes fatal consequences of being exposed to asbestos. In fact, research shows that youth don't reach full cognitive development until about 22 years of age, which may help explain why they don't always make the link between occupational exposures and health consequences. This underlines the importance of the role you play in making sure your young workers are protected from asbestos.

Improve young worker awareness of health and safety hazards as well as their workplace rights and responsibilities by:

- > Encouraging them to ask questions
- > Providing more training if necessary
- > Ensuring that they're properly protected from asbestos exposure

You can find more details on asbestos and your responsibilities to protect workers at HiddenKiller.ca.



WHAT ARE THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ASBESTOS EXPOSURE?

There are several diseases that can result from exposure to asbestos fibres, including asbestosis, a chronic lung disease. With asbestosis, the fibres gradually cause the lungs to harden and become scarred, making it difficult to breathe. Asbestos exposure can also cause lung cancer, especially when combined with smoking. Mesothelioma, also linked to asbestos exposure, is a malignant form of cancer in the lining of the chest or abdominal cavity.

The severity of illness associated with these diseases can depend on the concentration of asbestos fibres in the air, the duration of exposure, the size of asbestos fibres inhaled, and the frequency of exposure.

Remember: Asbestos has a latency period of 20 to 30 years. If a worker is exposed to asbestos at age 19, he or she could have an asbestos-related disease by age 40!

ARE YOUR WORKERS AT RISK?

Your workers risk exposure if they're involved in construction, demolition, or renovation work where they might disturb asbestos-containing materials. These materials are often found in structures built before 1990, but may be present in newer structures as well.

Asbestos may be present in the following materials:

- > Roof felt, shingles, and gutters
- > Vinyl tile, linoleum sheet flooring, and flooring adhesive
- > Deck undersheeting
- > Stucco
- > Loose, blown-in insulation (such as vermiculite) and batt insulation
- > Light fixtures
- > Soundproofing or decorative materials sprayed on walls and ceilings
- > Gypsum board filling compound, and patching and joint compound
- > Textured walls and ceilings
- > Window putty

ASBESTOSIS LUNG DISEASE

ARE YOUR WORKERS AT RISK?

TRAINING AND ORIENTATION ARE ESSENTIAL... THEY'RE ALSO REQUIRED BY LAW

Sections 3.22 to 3.25 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation specify what's required when you hire young workers (less than 25 years of age) or new workers (new to your jobsite or facing new hazards or procedures). If you hire young workers, ensure that training and orientation are carried out before they begin work. There are 13 topics you must include in training and orientation. You must also provide additional training and orientation if the worker needs or requests it. You must be able to present documentation of training and orientation to WorkSafeBC upon request. For full details, and to see a sample orientation checklist, visit www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/YoungWorker/Home.asp.



TRAINING PROTECT

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR WORKERS FROM ASBESTOS?

To protect your workers from potential asbestos exposure and to demonstrate your due diligence, take the proper precautions.

conduct a hazardous materials survey

If asbestos is suspected, you have a duty to ensure that a hazardous materials survey is conducted prior to any renovation or demolition. The survey includes a walk-through inspection, sample collection, sample analysis, and reporting and communicating of the results. The survey must be conducted by a qualified professional who is familiar with proper walk-through and sample collection practices. A copy of the survey must be available on-site.

comply with the requirements of the regulation

The following parts of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and accompanying guidelines list your responsibilities with regard to occupational exposure to asbestos. They set out what you must do to eliminate, reduce, or manage workers' exposure risk. You'll find the complete Regulation online at www2.worksafebc.com/Publications/OHSRegulation/Home.asp.

- > **Part 5: Chemical Agents and Biological Agents** (including regulations for controlling exposure and protecting workers, exposure control plans, and the hierarchy of controls)
- > **Part 6: Substance Specific Requirements** (for asbestos)
- > **Part 20: Construction, Excavation and Demolition** (demolition information on hazardous material surveys)

Note: Guidelines for all of the above are available online.

implement an exposure control plan

You must have an exposure control plan if your workers are, or may be, exposed to airborne fibres above 0.05 fibres per millilitre. The plan must include steps to eliminate risks or to control and reduce risks by either substituting less hazardous materials or using engineering controls, administrative controls, or personal protective equipment (PPE). The plan needs to outline safe work procedures. If the plan calls for PPE in the form of respiratory protection, be sure to provide workers with the appropriate level of protection. Educate workers on how to use equipment. Respirators must be fit-tested to ensure a proper seal.

additional considerations for young workers

Young workers may not have the same level of exposure awareness as older, more experienced workers. They may be more vulnerable to exposure because of inexperience, physical and psychological immaturity, lack of awareness of health and safety issues, and a reduced likelihood of recognizing the long-term consequences of exposure.

You can increase young workers' awareness of hazards through training and orientation, and then reinforce their awareness through ongoing supervision and safety meetings. Help young workers understand that they have a right to ask questions, to be protected from hazards, and to refuse unsafe work. Remind them that they also have a responsibility to wear the gear provided and follow safe work procedures.



RESOURCES

Hidden Killer website

WorkSafeBC has created a website dedicated to asbestos. The site explains how asbestos is a hidden killer and offers facts to protect everyone on the jobsite from asbestos exposure, including you, your workers, friends, and family. To learn more, go to HiddenKiller.ca.

TOOLS FOR SAFETY TALKS

The following are some WorkSafeBC resources that may help you educate and train young workers.

APPRENTICESHIP PORTAL

This site provides trade- and topic-specific health and safety resources that you can use in safety meetings or to help improve the knowledge and awareness of young workers and apprentices. Visit the portal at www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/Apprenticeships/Home.asp.

6-MINUTE SAFETY TALKS

Designed to help you deliver a short safety meeting, these are available for a number of topics. Each topic includes an employer/instructor guide and young worker/student handout. Go to www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/YoungWorker/ApprenticeshipPrograms.asp.

Topics include:

- > Asbestos
- > Exposure to Airborne Contaminants
- > Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- > Health and Safety Responsibilities
- > Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

TOOLBOX MEETING GUIDES

Download the following ready-made meeting guides on asbestos exposure and rights and responsibilities at www2.worksafebc.com/Portals/Construction/ToolboxMeetingGuides-Index.asp :

- > Health hazards of asbestos
- > Asbestos removal
- > Preventing interference with the respirator seal
- > Eye and face protection
- > The right to refuse unsafe work

more print resources and helpful tools

- > *Asbestos Hazards in Demolition, Renovations and Salvage*
- > *Safe Work Practices for Handling Asbestos*
- > *Safe Work Practices for Asbestos Laboratories*
- > *Ten steps to compliance with asbestos abatement requirements of section 20.112 for a pre-1990 house/building demolition*
- > *Asbestos Hazards When Renovating Older Homes*
- > *Exposure control plan for cutting small amounts (< 3 square metres) of gypsum board containing asbestos*
- > *Breathe Safer: How to Use Respirators Safely and Start a Respirator Program*
- > *Young Worker Orientation*
- > *Sample Respirator Program*
- > PPE information sheets

video resources

WorkSafeBC has several videos you can use to augment training and orientation or to reinforce exposure awareness during safety meetings. Below is a sample of the video topics that are available for free download at www.worksafebc.com/publications:

- > Asbestos
- > Asbestos in demolition and renovation (slide show)
- > WHMIS



WHY IT MATTERS

It matters because workers are getting sick and dying.

You need to protect young workers now to save them from diseases later. Many people dying of occupational diseases today — such as lung cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis — were exposed to asbestos when they were younger. Last year, 148,000 work days were lost as a result of occupational diseases, which accounted for 2,610 claims. Many of these were from asbestos-related diseases. Over the past five years, on average, more than 50 people have died each year from work-related asbestos exposure, which makes it the **number one occupational killer**.



RESOURCES
REFUSE UNSAFE WORK

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LEARN MORE Visit the asbestos website at HiddenKiller.ca and the WorkSafeBC Young Worker Portal at www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/YoungWorker/Home.asp.

QUESTIONS? E-mail yworker@worksafebc.com.

Scan the tag with your smartphone to go directly to the WorkSafeBC Young Worker Portal.

Get the free mobile app at gettag.mobi or search "tag reader" in the App Store.



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