

Why you must manage asbestos

Why you must manage asbestos-containing materials (ACMs):

- When ACMs are disturbed or damaged, fibres may be released into the air which, when inhaled, can cause serious diseases
- These diseases often take a long time to develop but once diagnosed, it is often too late to do anything
- There are around 5000 work related deaths each year (more than the number of people killed on the road) and this number is still increasing
- ACMs can be present in any building built or refurbished before the year 2000
- Damage to ACMs can cause distress, disruption and require expensive clean ups
- Incidents can be investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and lead to prosecution

There is no reason for ACMs to be damaged if all those individuals with roles in ensuring ACMs are properly managed, take on board their responsibilities and ensure these are properly met.

Premises and or site managers and project management staff overseeing refurbishment, maintenance, repair, demolition and installation (eg IT, electrical) projects play key roles in ensuring this happens. However, despite the NCC '[Asbestos Control and Management Policy and Procedure](#)' (document **P602** on Schools' PeopleNet) and premises management training having been available for many years, incidents are still occurring and too many people in these roles seem unaware of their responsibilities and what they should be doing.

To properly manage asbestos on your site and or in your projects, you must ensure the following.

Premises managers must:

- Familiarise themselves with the content of P602 and their responsibilities
- Attend premises management training including the module on asbestos awareness and management. This can be booked onto through HR Direct on 01603 222212
- Ensure contractors accessing your site sign the site asbestos register and ensure arrangements are in place for this to happen during weekends and or holidays
- Understand the limitations of their asbestos registers and that they may not have identified all the ACMs present in the building, particularly those that might be hidden within the fabric of the building
- Develop an asbestos management plan for your site, detailing the arrangements you will have in place to manage ACMs
- Undertake periodic checks on the condition of ACMs and record these checks in the asbestos management plan
- Ensure all school staff undertake the asbestos e-learning training
- Ensure that full access is given to a surveyor undertaking surveying and or sampling, especially where needed prior to any refurbishment and demolition works taking place

Project managers must:

- Ensure that prior to any works involving drilling, breaking, cutting etc taking place, the need for additional surveying is considered, even if the project is being managed by someone else (eg NPS) and not your own staff.
- Ensure that Health and Safety for Project Management training is attended by all those involved in specifying, commissioning and overseeing projects (book through HR Direct on 01603 222212)

Note: Projects do not have to be large-scale for there to be a risk – even basic works such as drilling a few holes can cause damage to an ACM.