

**Q: Why asbestos is my concern in demolishing building structures?**



**A:** Although most products made nowadays do not contain asbestos, it is still likely that you can find asbestos containing material (ACM) in old buildings/structures. Improper handling or removal of these ACM may give rise to release of very fine fibres of asbestos, which can remain airborne for a very long period of time. Under these circumstances, it is possible that some of these fibres would be inhaled by you, your family members and neighbours. These asbestos fibres, once inhaled, can remain in the body for many years and hence increase your health risk due to such exposure.

**Q: Where is asbestos likely to be found in building structures?**



**A:** Among others, cement sheets are one of the most common ACM found at the cages, canopies or roofing structures. As it is difficult for the general public to tell with certainty whether a material contains asbestos or not by its appearance or colour, it is more appropriate for you to take a precautionary attitude and treat it as suspected ACM unless proved otherwise by a registered asbestos laboratory.

**Q: When is asbestos a problem?**

**A:** Asbestos cement sheets generally do not pose a health risk if undisturbed. When it is broken into pieces or dismantled inappropriately, they release fibres. If inhaled, they can lead to health problems.

**Q: How can I comply with the Air Pollution Control Ordinance if I need to remove asbestos in my premises?**



**A:** As the owner/occupier of your premises, you must hire a registered asbestos contractor to carry out the removal of the asbestos cement sheets and notify the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) of the date on which the asbestos removal is to be commenced. For other ACM, you may approach EPD for advice.

**Q: Why and how does the registered asbestos contractor carry out the asbestos removal work?**

**A:** Asbestos fibres in the asbestos cement sheets are generally locked into the base material matrix and therefore under proper usage, the risk of asbestos fibre release is minimum. The risk during removal of the asbestos cement sheets would also be low if the registered asbestos contractor has adopted adequate precautionary measures. These include the segregation of work area, provision of decontamination facility, minimum breakage of asbestos cement sheets and sufficient spraying of wetting agent at asbestos cement sheets during removal. Other safety and health requirements include continuous supervision of the work by a registered asbestos supervisor, wearing protective clothing and respiratory protective equipment for workers' safety as well as air monitoring around the work area. For removal of asbestos cement roofing sheets covered with a layer of concrete screeding, the roofing sheets should be separated carefully into manageable sizes for easy handling and packaging for disposal. This could be done by manually chiselling the concrete screeding along the joints of the asbestos cement sheets or along a convenient line for separating the asbestos cement sheets before taking down the asbestos cement sheets with the concrete screeding intact. All debris of concrete screeding so produced should be bagged immediately and disposed of as asbestos waste.



**Q: How much will asbestos removal in building structures cost?**

**A:** To ensure adequate protection of health and the environment and full compliance with the legal requirements, it is advisable to plan ahead and allow

adequate budget for hiring a registered asbestos contractor to remove the ACM for you.

The cost of removal depends on the size and complexity of the work. It has been shown that the cost may be reduced if the owners join together to hire one registered asbestos contractor to remove asbestos. The cost for removing asbestos cement sheets is also affected by the following factors:

- 1) size of asbestos cement sheets;
- 2) whether the asbestos cement sheets are covered by cement screeding;
- 3) the type of asbestos containing structures (e.g. canopy, roof top structure);
- 4) whether scaffolding is required;
- 5) is the metal frame required to be removed or the wall refurbished after removal, etc.

It is suggested to obtain quotations from more than one registered asbestos contractor to compare the price.

**Q: Can I borrow the money from the government if I have financial problem in employing a registered asbestos contractor to dismantle the asbestos containing building structures?**

**A:** You may approach the Buildings Department for enquiry on loan matters. Their Building Safety Loan Scheme provides loans to individual owners of private buildings who wish to obtain financial assistance in carrying out maintenance and repair works (including removal of unauthorized building works) voluntarily, or in compliance with statutory orders, to reinstate or improve the safety conditions of their buildings.

**Q: What is the advice if we need to carry out the repair of external walls of our building?**

**A:** For general maintenance of external walls of a building and where building structure removal is involved, it is advantageous to the owners if a registered asbestos contractor is a nominated sub-contractor for the asbestos removal of the building structures under the main contract, on the basis of unit rate and re-measurement of the ACM. Where necessary, you may appoint a registered asbestos consultant before the work to conduct asbestos investigation and prepare an asbestos investigation

report. Very often, the cost of removal of asbestos canopies, cages, and flat roof structures in the same building will be significantly lower than carrying out the asbestos removal work by individual owners.

**Q: Since 4 April 2014, in accordance with section 80 of the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO), the import, transshipment, supply and use of asbestos and ACM are banned in Hong Kong. What should I do with the existing domestic asbestos containing structures?**

- A:** According to section 80 of the APCO, use, in relation to asbestos or ACM, means
- (a) affixing, applying, spraying or installing asbestos or ACM on or in any premises;
  - (b) adding, mixing or inserting asbestos or ACM to, with, into any material, substance, product or article for manufacturing or producing any product or substance; or
  - (c) wrapping any material, substance, product or article with asbestos or ACM.

As such, existing asbestos building structures are not affected.

**Q: Is storage of new asbestos cement sheets illegal? If some of the asbestos cement sheets of the existing canopies, roof or podium structures, fencing and retaining wall in farm land were partly broken, can the broken asbestos cement sheets be replaced by new asbestos cement sheets?**

**A:** Since ACM pose little health risk as long as they remain intact and undisturbed, storage of asbestos or ACM is not banned but the owner should pay attention that those stored asbestos or ACM are kept undisturbed. As the APCO prohibits any person from installing any ACM on or in any premises, the broken asbestos cement sheets cannot be replaced by new asbestos cement sheets. A person should hire registered asbestos contractors to remove



and dispose of the asbestos cement sheets properly. If the retaining wall and fencing is required to be rebuilt, a person shall use materials which are free of asbestos.



**Q: How should the asbestos waste be handled if it has already been removed from the building structures?**

**A:** Registered asbestos contractors should place the asbestos waste into metal drums or strong plastic bags with proper labels for temporary storage in a private and safe place in accordance with Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation, and arrange a licensed chemical waste collector to remove the waste as soon as possible. Please note that asbestos waste is a type of chemical waste prescribed under the above Regulation and should not be mixed with household waste, nor delivered to the refuse collection points nor public dumping areas.

**Q: Is it an offence if I do not comply with the APCO?**

**A:** It is an offence under sections 73, 75, 77 and 80 of the APCO if you carry out asbestos abatement work



without prior written notification to the EPD or fail to appoint a registered asbestos contractor to carry out the asbestos abatement work or illegally import, transship, supply or use asbestos or ACM. If you are convicted of such offences, the maximum penalty is a fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for 6 months.

**Disclaimer:** Reference to specific commercial contract or works does not imply endorsement or consent of these by the Environmental Protection Department. The department does not accept any responsibility for action taken as a result of this information.

## Some other useful information

### 1. List of Registered Asbestos Contractors

#### 1 Gor Limited

E-mail: [info@1gor.com.hk](mailto:info@1gor.com.hk)  
Tel: 3163 9332 Fax: 2124 1463

#### AAA Services Limited

E-mail: [aaa@aaalhk.com](mailto:aaa@aaalhk.com)  
Tel: 2168 7800 Fax: 2380 6699

#### Achieve Construction and Engineering Company Limited

E-mail: [achieveld8@yahoo.com.hk](mailto:achieveld8@yahoo.com.hk)  
Tel: 2343 1388 Fax: 2343 1283

#### Asbestos Removal Contractors (HK) Company Limited

E-mail: [arccheng@netvigator.com](mailto:arccheng@netvigator.com)  
Tel: 2850 8876 Fax: 2850 8927

#### C.B.M. Asbestos Abatement Limited

E-mail: [inf@cbm.com.hk](mailto:inf@cbm.com.hk)  
Tel: 2698 6027 Fax: 2696 3799

#### Environmental Technology Engineering Company Limited

E-mail: [ete.hongkong@gmail.com](mailto:ete.hongkong@gmail.com)  
Tel: 2777 3238 Fax: 2777 3398

#### Fineness Goal Limited

E-mail: [fineness.g@gmail.com](mailto:fineness.g@gmail.com)  
Tel: 2387 2581 Fax: 2386 5393

#### General Central Engineering Limited

E-mail: [info@gceng.com.hk](mailto:info@gceng.com.hk)  
Tel: 2428 8923 Fax: 2484 1662

#### Long Engineering Limited

E-mail: [enquiry@longgroup.hk](mailto:enquiry@longgroup.hk)  
Tel: 5200 6400 Fax: 3520 1181

#### Sublett and Associates (HK) Limited

E-mail: [sublett.hk@gmail.com](mailto:sublett.hk@gmail.com)  
Tel: 2333 1019 Fax: 2765 6396

#### Teemway Engineering Limited

E-mail: [works@teemway.com](mailto:works@teemway.com)  
Tel: 2796 2268 Fax: 2796 2217

#### UBW Environmental Co. Limited

E-mail: [sales@ubw.com.hk](mailto:sales@ubw.com.hk)  
Tel: 2516 6866 Fax: 2904 1893

### 2. List of Registered Asbestos Laboratories

#### Aspec (HK) Limited – Aspec Testing

E-mail: [mail@aspec.biz](mailto:mail@aspec.biz)  
Tel: 3101 0671 Fax: 3101 0647

#### ETS - Testconsult Limited

E-mail: [asbestos@ets-testconsult.com](mailto:asbestos@ets-testconsult.com)  
Tel: 2695 8318 Fax: 2695 3944

#### Fugro Technical Services Limited

E-mail: [matlab@fugro.com](mailto:matlab@fugro.com)  
Tel: 2450 8233 Fax: 2450 6138

#### The Lab (Asia) Limited

E-mail: [info@thelab.asia](mailto:info@thelab.asia) / [donney@thelab.asia](mailto:donney@thelab.asia)  
Tel: 2470 2588 / 9098 3164 Fax: 2470 2589

### Enquiries

General	Tel: 2755 3554	Fax: 2834 9960
Hotline Complaint	Tel/Fax: 2838 3111	
Web Site	<a href="http://www.epd.gov.hk">http://www.epd.gov.hk</a>	
Correspondence	Environmental Protection Department, 28/F, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong	

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# Asbestos Removal of Building Structures



 Environmental Protection Department