

Managing Asbestos in Schools

Omega Environmental Services

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Managing Asbestos in School Buildings

About us

A leading asbestos removal contractor, Omega Environmental Services are advising the UK schools not to leave it too late to plan asbestos removal works over the holiday periods. We are advising all UK schools to arrange thorough asbestos surveys to identify and manage asbestos in all school premises. To book an appointment please contact us by email at info@omega-enviro.co.uk or phone us on 01462 410 255.

Why Manage Asbestos?

Asbestos must be properly managed to prevent people dying from asbestos diseases in the future. Workers who carry out building maintenance and repair are particularly at risk. Each year 1000 people who worked in such trades die from past exposures to asbestos fibers. Unfortunately, these workers are still at risk. Half a million commercial buildings still contain asbestos. The teaching unions consider that the total removal of asbestos is the safest option, whereas the Government considers that "managing" asbestos is the best approach. However there is growing evidence that schools are not managing their asbestos effectively and that in many cases the asbestos is not in good

condition. Much of it is hidden and a normal visual survey will not identify the fact that fibers are being given off. Only comprehensive air-testing can determine that. The effective management of asbestos in schools is essential because children are particularly vulnerable to developing disease after an exposure to asbestos.

Who is responsible for managing asbestos in schools?

According to the HSE 'Anyone who has responsibility for the maintenance and/or repair of non-domestic premises, including schools, is a 'duty holder' as defined in Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. For the majority of schools, the duty holder will be the employer.

Contact Details

Northern Office

Suite 4
Birch Lane Business Park
Stonnall, Aldridge
West Midlands
WS 9 0NF
T: 01922 215215
info@omega-enviro.co.uk

Southern Office

Suite 1
Pirton Grange , Pirton Road
Shillington
Herts
SG5 3HB
T: 01462 410255
info@omega-enviro.co.uk

Welsh Office

7 Endeavour Close
Purcell Avenue
Sandfields
Port Talbot
SA12 7PT
T: Tel: 01639 899808
info@omega-enviro.co.uk

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HSE's 8 Steps to Managing Asbestos in Buildings

<i>Step 1 - Find out if asbestos is present</i>	<i>Step 2 - Assess the condition of any ACM (asbestos containing material)</i>	<i>Step 3 - Survey and Sample for Asbestos</i>
<p>Was the building built or refurbished before 2000?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, assume asbestos is present. • If no, asbestos is unlikely to be present – no action required. • Do you already have information on asbestos in your building? • Walk around your building to identify all ACMs (Asbestos Containing Materials) or presumed ACMs, including areas not normally visited like roof voids, store rooms etc. 	<p>Assess the amount and condition of any ACMs, or presumed ACMs in the building to tell you how likely they are to release asbestos fibres into the air.</p> <p>The type of ACM, the amount of it and its condition will determine its potential to release asbestos fibres into the air, if disturbed.</p>	<p>Have a suitably trained person conduct a survey to identify ACMs.</p> <p>Have the materials analysed to prove if asbestos is present, and what type it is.</p> <p>You may choose to employ a suitably trained person to do a survey of the premises to identify ACMs,</p> <p>Particularly if you are planning maintenance or refurbishment of the premises or installing wiring or pipework/ ducting. The survey should identify what types of ACMs are present, where they are and what condition they are in.</p>

<i>Step 4 - Keep a written record or register</i>	<i>Step 5 - act on your findings</i>	<i>Step 6 - Keep your record up to date</i>
<p>Write down the ACMs you have found, where they are and their condition. Record the roles and responsibilities for managing asbestos in your organisation.</p> <p>You need to prepare a record that shows where the asbestos or presumed asbestos is, the type if known, its form, and what condition it is in. This record needs to be simple, clear and always available at the premises so that you, or any other person that needs to know where the ACMs are, can easily find them. It could be a plan or diagram, a written list or a computer-based record – storing it electronically can make it easier to update.</p>	<p>Your plan should include passing on your asbestos register to any worker/contractor carrying out maintenance work on your property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the potential risk from the ACMs – how likely are they to be disturbed? • Draw up a priority plan for action. You must assess whether the ACMs are being, or are likely to be disturbed. <p>If asbestos is likely to be disturbed during routine maintenance work or daily use of the building, it will release fibres. If it cannot be easily repaired and protected, you should have it removed. This work must be carried out by someone trained and competent to carry out the task.</p>	<p>Regularly re-inspect any ACMs in your premises and update your records;</p> <p>Monitor and review the effectiveness of your action plan.</p> <p>Even after your action plan is completed, you need to continue to manage the risks from asbestos left in place in your building. Walk around your building to review your record and update it as necessary. Look at the ACMs left in place, including those you have sealed or enclosed, to see if they have deteriorated or been damaged or disturbed in any way. The time between inspections will depend on the type of material, where it is and its condition, but it should be at least every six to 12 months.</p>

Who is most likely to disturb asbestos?

Workers who carry out maintenance and repair jobs such as cutting or drilling into walls, ceilings or partitions; repairing boilers, and laying cables.

Such workers include:

- Construction and demolition contractors, roofers, electricians, painters and decorators, joiners, plumbers, gas fitters, plasterers, shop fitters, heating and ventilation engineers, and surveyors.
- Electronics: Phone and information technology engineers, and alarm installers;
- General maintenance engineers and others who work on the fabric of a building.

If you need to have work done:

- All work with asbestos must be done by trained people using proper precautions;
- You need to use a licensed contractor to work on high-risk materials, such as pipe insulation, asbestos insulation panels or sprayed asbestos.
- You need a trained contractor even for work on materials such as asbestos cement, textured coatings or vinyl tiles.

About Omega Environmental

Leading asbestos removal contractor, Omega Environmental provides asbestos removal services, asbestos disposal, soft strip demolition and asbestos surveys. We are advising UK schools not to leave it too late to plan asbestos removal works over the holiday periods.

Omega Environmental specialise in local authority work and particular experience in asbestos removal projects in UK schools. We have recently worked on the following school projects: Etone College (Nuneaton), Corpus Christi School (Birmingham), Rugby School (Rugby), Rainbow Forge Primary School (Sheffield), Pipworth Primary School (Sheffield), Parliament Hill (North West London) and John Warner School (Hertfordshire).

Omega Environmental have a dynamic management structure and a highly trained workforce, many of whom have been in the asbestos removal industry for 10+ years. We are fully accredited by ARCA, ISO 9001, CHAS, SMAS, ConstructionLine and Acclaim.

Example of our works at Corpus Christi School, Birmingham:



Example of our works at John Warner School, Hertfordshire:

