

# SAFETY FOCUS

## ASBESTOS AWARENESS

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral fiber. It can be found in roofing materials, ceiling tiles, floor tiles, walls and floors of homes and businesses. Manufacturers also used asbestos in automobile brake linings, gaskets and boiler seals, and insulation for pipes, ducts and appliances.

**WHO:** Here at the University of Utah it is our policy that our workforce will not disturb asbestos materials during the course of their workday. This type of work is highly regulated and must only be performed by specially trained and licensed abatement workers.

**WHAT:** Types of work activities that may disturb asbestos containing materials: drilling, cutting, abrading, sanding, chipping, breaking, crushing, sawing, or otherwise make friable materials that may contain asbestos.

Friable means any asbestos containing material that, when dry, can be crumbled, pulverized, or reduced to powder by hand pressure

Types of materials that may contain asbestos:

- Thermal system insulation (TSI)
- Sheet Vinyl floor covering (backing)
- 9" and sometimes 12" floor tile
- Ceiling texturing or acoustical texturing
- Lab countertops and fume hood lining
- Mastic
- Roofing coatings
- Ceiling tiles, wall boards and joint compounds
- Occasionally fire doors and wire mesh screens

**WHY:** Asbestos fibers are small and can penetrate to the deepest areas of the lungs, once in the lungs the fibers lodge in the lung tissue and can cause diseases such as asbestosis and cancers such as mesothelioma.

**HOW:** Controlling the release of asbestos fibers into the air is critical in controlling the hazard. **No work activity which involves the disturbance of suspect asbestos containing material may be performed until those materials have been inspected for asbestos by a certified inspector.**

Training on asbestos awareness can be found here: <https://utah.bridgeapp.com/learner/courses/75738ed0/enroll>



Image provided by OSHA