

# Safety Moment

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## Asbestos Management at the University of Calgary

University of Calgary | VP Services | Environment, Health and Safety

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# Asbestos Management

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- Asbestos containing building materials can be found in most University of Calgary buildings and is most prevalent in buildings constructed before 1990. It is found in many different building materials such as floor tiles, ceiling tiles, mechanical insulation, plaster, and fire proofing to name a few.
- The University's approach to asbestos management is guided by the principles of:
  - Meeting or exceeding regulatory requirements and asbestos management practice norms.
  - Transparency of asbestos-related practices and activities including regular engagement with stakeholders.
  - Obtaining advice from external asbestos experts when required.
  - Continual review and refinement of asbestos management practices as new information becomes available.

# Approach & Processes

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- The University's asbestos management approach and processes are set out in the Asbestos Management Plan. The EHS Department is responsible for the content of the Asbestos Management Plan which is a critical control document in the overall Environment Health and Safety Management System. The EHS Department provides subject matter expertise and is the main contact for Alberta Occupational Health and Safety on asbestos related matters.
- The University's Asbestos Management Group within Facilities works collaboratively with the EHS Department and is responsible for executing asbestos inventory and project related processes in accordance with the Asbestos Management Plan.

# Asbestos Abatement

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- When a project is carried out that impacts building materials, the asbestos inventory is referenced to determine if the impacted materials contain asbestos. In some cases the asbestos inventory does not contain sufficient information and sampling is conducted to determine if the materials being disturbed contain asbestos. The asbestos inventory is then updated based on the results.
- When a project is carried out that requires asbestos abatement, the Asbestos Management Group works with asbestos consultants who:
  - Develop the abatement scope of work, cost estimate and scheduling.
  - Monitor activities of the abatement contractor to ensure they are working in accordance with legislation and the Asbestos Management Plan.
  - Conduct air monitoring and report on results.
- There are typically 250 – 300 asbestos abatement projects in a year, with an additional 450 – 500 inventory review activities.

# Asbestos Abatement

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- Asbestos abatement involves removal of an asbestos containing material. For low risk, small scope projects often carried out by university staff, asbestos risk can be managed in place without removing the asbestos containing material. Safe Work Instructions are used for these projects which include activities such as drilling through walls. The use of a Safe Work Instruction can only be implemented if directed by the Asbestos Management Group following a review of the scope of work.
- Alberta Occupational Health and Safety usually conduct multiple visits per year to inspect University asbestos abatement projects. Based on the results of these visits the University has developed a trusting relationship with the regulator.

# In closing

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- Significant resources are devoted to asbestos management at the University given the prevalence of asbestos containing materials on campus and the extensive asbestos related compliance requirements. Another factor in the rigorous approach taken to asbestos management is the desire to demonstrate to the campus community that this hazardous material is being effectively managed as part of our commitment to maintain a safe and healthy learning and working environment.