

Need An Asbestos Survey?



A Message from the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency

Can I do an asbestos survey myself?

Only a certified AHERA Building Inspector can perform an asbestos survey unless: (1) your project clearly qualifies as an owner-occupied, single-family residence; (2) the project is limited to renovation (no demolition); and (3) you, as the resident homeowner, are conducting the renovation yourself (contractors doing the work must have an asbestos survey performed by an AHERA Building Inspector). For more information about owner-occupied, single-family residences, refer to Spokane Clean Air's Renovation, Demolition and Asbestos information sheet, which is available by calling 477-4727 or by visiting http://www.spokanecleanair.org/asbestos_publications.asp

What should I know before hiring an AHERA Building Inspector?

You should do your research before hiring an AHERA Building Inspector. Be sure that you are familiar with Spokane Clean Air's asbestos survey requirements and make sure that any AHERA Building Inspector that you hire knows the asbestos survey regulations inside and out. To review a company's penalty/violation history, visit www.spokanecleanair.org/penalty_history.asp. Here are some questions you might ask before hiring an AHERA Building Inspector:

How long have they been a certified AHERA Building Inspector and how many asbestos surveys do they perform each year?

Anyone can become a certified AHERA Building Inspector if they attend a 3-day training course and annual 4-hour refreshers. However, to become truly proficient at performing asbestos surveys, experience is the key.

Do they know when Spokane Clean Air's asbestos regulations were last revised?

This question relates to how much the AHERA Building Inspector stays on top of the latest regulations. Fairly significant asbestos survey revisions became effective in September 2009.

Can the person provide references from customers that they have done similar work for?

The AHERA Building Inspector should be able to provide you with several references. You should select at least three of the references you would like to contact. Ask former customers if they were satisfied with the work that the inspector provided and whether or not the inspector completed the project as agreed upon.

How much does an asbestos survey cost and what does the cost include?

The costs associated with getting an asbestos survey done can vary based on the size of the structure, its age, how complex it is, and if it is limited in scope or designed to include a thorough inspection of the entire structure. These are some of the factors which may effect the time it takes to conduct the inspection and how many building material samples need to be collected for laboratory analysis. It is recommended that you obtain bids from more than one AHERA Building Inspector, rather than accepting a single bid. Be sure to describe your structure to the inspector in exactly the same terms, so you can compare bids. Ask each AHERA Building Inspector to itemize/list all associated costs such as labor, laboratory analysis, insurance, and bonding. An AHERA Building Inspector who comes to your home/business to look at the structure will give you the most realistic bid.

How will they do the work?

Refer to Spokane Clean Air's Asbestos Survey Guidance for details of what's involved in a thorough asbestos survey. The guidance is available on the Agency's website by calling 477-4727 or by going to http://www.spokanecleanair.org/asbestos_publications.asp.

In summary, the AHERA Building Inspector will visually look for suspect asbestos-containing material (ACM) throughout the structure and on the outside of the structure.

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If the scope of the renovation work is limited to one area (e.g., one room), the inspector will focus his/her attention on that room. Regardless of the area being inspected, the inspection must be thorough.

Suspect ACM includes, but is not limited to the following: cement asbestos siding, window putty, sprayed-on popcorn ceilings, sheetrock tape mud, furnace insulation, pipe insulation, sheet vinyl/ linoleum and under-sheeting, floor tiles and the glue/mastic used to adhere them, roofing felts, roofing coatings, and others.

If suspect ACM is observed, the inspector will collect a small sample of the material for laboratory analysis. Before collecting a sample, the sample area will generally be wetted with a spray mist bottle of soapy water to prevent any asbestos fibers that may be present from becoming airborne. A sample of the material will then be collected and placed in a sealed container (e.g., small plastic baggy) and the sealed container will be labeled for identification. The sample identification is subsequently used by the laboratory performing the analysis for asbestos content and may be referenced in the asbestos survey report prepared by the AHERA Building Inspector.

What should you get when the job is complete?

After the laboratory has analyzed any samples that were submitted by the AHERA Building Inspector, the inspector will finalize the asbestos survey report and give it to you. Pay close attention to any limitations identified in the asbestos survey. Make sure it clearly explains what was inspected and the findings in regard to whether or not asbestos-containing material is present. Spokane Clean Air regulations require that all asbestos surveys contain, at a minimum, the following:

- ✓ Date that the inspection was performed;
- ✓ AHERA Building Inspector signature, certification number, date certification expires, and name and address of entity providing AHERA Building Inspector certification;
- ✓ Site address(es) / location(s) where the inspection was performed;

- ✓ Description of the structure(s) / area(s) inspected (e.g., use, approximate age and outside dimensions);
- ✓ The purpose of the inspection (e.g., pre-demolition asbestos survey, renovation of 2nd floor, removal of acoustical ceiling texturing due to water damage, etc.), if known;
- ✓ Detailed description of any limitations of the asbestos survey (e.g., inaccessible areas not inspected, survey limited to renovation area, etc.);
- ✓ Identify all suspect-asbestos containing materials and their locations, except where limitations of the asbestos survey prevented such identification;
- ✓ Identify materials presumed to be asbestos-containing material;
- ✓ Exact location where each bulk asbestos sample was taken (e.g., schematic and/or other description); and
- ✓ Complete copy of the laboratory report for bulk asbestos samples analyzed.

For asbestos-containing materials, the asbestos survey will also include the following:

- ✓ Description of the color of each asbestos-containing material;
- ✓ The location of each asbestos-containing material (e.g., schematic and/or other description); and
- ✓ The approximate quantity of each asbestos-containing material (generally in square or linear feet).

For more assistance, contact Spokane Clean Air at 477-4727.

