

Need Asbestos Removed?



A Message from the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency

How do I hire an asbestos removal contractor?

The process of selecting an asbestos contractor to remove asbestos from your home or business may seem overwhelming. This information sheet can help you gather information and will allow you to come to an informed decision before you hire an asbestos contractor. One factor to consider is the work performance of the contractor doing the work. Always keep in mind, if an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

What should I know before hiring an asbestos removal contractor?

You should do your research before hiring an asbestos contractor. Be sure that you and any contractors that you hire are familiar with Spokane Clean Air's asbestos requirements. It is up to each person to research a contractor's credentials prior to hiring them. Here are some questions you might ask before hiring an asbestos removal contractor:

- Are they certified by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) as an asbestos abatement contractor?**

Request a copy of their certification or visit L&I's website at: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AtoZ/Asbestos/contractorlist.asp>

- Are they registered with L&I as a contractor, and do they have a bond and insurance?**

Request a copy of these documents from the contractor, or visit L&I's website at: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/tradescicensing/contractors/hirecon/>

- How many asbestos projects do they conduct within Spokane County each year and how many violations have they received from regulatory agencies like Spokane Clean Air or L&I?**

Many contractors have received some type of violation in the past, but some violations are purely administrative

while others are more severe and involve improper asbestos removal work practices or disposal methods. Some companies do many projects, but receive few violations where other companies may perform fewer projects, but receive more violations. The property owner and owner's agent(s) are often held accountable for asbestos violations, so doing your research and making an informed decision when hiring an asbestos contractor can help you avoid being cited for violations of asbestos regulations. To find out if a company has been found in violation of asbestos regulations by Spokane Clean Air, you may submit a Public Records Request Form, which is available at www.spokanecleanair.org or 477-4727. For L&I, visit www.lni.wa.gov/main/aboutlni/publicdisclosure/ or call (360) 902-5556. You may also visit the Better Business Bureau's website at <http://www.bbb.org> or call 455-4200.

- Can the contractor provide references from customers that they have done similar work for?**

The contractor 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 contractor provided and whether or not the contractor completed the project as agreed upon.

- How much does asbestos removal cost and what does the cost include?**

Costs associated with asbestos removal can vary based on the size of the project, the amount of asbestos being removed, and the time required to perform the removal. It is recommended that you obtain bids from more than one contractor, rather than accepting a single bid from one contractor. L&I requires that you provide each contractor with a copy of your completed asbestos survey report (unless material is presumed to be asbestos) before they bid on your job. Be sure to describe the project to each contractor in exactly the same terms, so you can compare bids.

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Ask each contractor to itemize all associated costs such as labor, materials, insurance, bonding, air monitoring costs, permit/notification fees, and asbestos waste disposal fees. A contractor who comes to your home/business to look at the anticipated work will give you the most realistic bid.

Request a written work plan from each contractor submitting a bid. The work plan should include a description of the removal and clean up methods to be used. The work plan gives you a chance to better compare services.

What information should the contractor provide you once they've been hired?

Request that the asbestos removal contractor provide you with copies of the following documentation:

- ◆ Washington State Certifications for Supervisors & Workers at the site (L&I).
- ◆ Confirmation that L&I received an Asbestos Project Notification for the asbestos project.
- ◆ Confirmation that Spokane Clean Air received a Notice of Intent for the asbestos project.

How will they do the work?

Prior to beginning the removal, have the contractor show you how the work area has been set up. Have them explain the process they are going to use to remove the asbestos. Contractors should never use any of your personal property, such as tools, hoses, vacuums, mops, or any other personal belongings for the project.

Here is a short list of what you will typically see for an asbestos removal project:

- ◆ All moveable objects removed from the work area provided they haven't already been contaminated with asbestos (You can do this yourself or the contractor can do it for you; there may be an additional fee).
- ◆ Asbestos warning signs demarcating the work area.
- ◆ Air sampling pumps collecting air samples in the work area during the removal of asbestos.
- ◆ Workers wearing personal protective equipment (respirators and protective suits)
- ◆ A wetting agent to keep the asbestos-containing material wet during the removal process.

- ◆ Asbestos-containing materials placed in leak-tight containers as soon as possible.
- ◆ Asbestos-containing materials kept wet until sealed in leak-tight containers.
- ◆ Leak-tight containers clearly marked with the date material was collected, waste generator (e.g., your business name), and the address where the waste was generated.
- ◆ Leak-tight containers that are not dropped, thrown, slid, or otherwise damaged.
- ◆ No visible emissions from the asbestos project.

Some asbestos removal projects require enclosures or containments:

- ◆ Plastic sheeting on walls and/or floors to form an enclosure, which isolates the work.
- ◆ A 3-chambered decontamination unit (a.k.a., "decon" area) equipped with a working shower that is connected to the work area, and used by employees when entering and exiting the containment or enclosure.
- ◆ A negative air machine equipped with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, which is known as a "HEPA unit" creates negative air pressure within the containment to keep airborne asbestos fibers from leaving the containment.
- ◆ A transparent viewing port, when feasible.

What should the job look like when it's done?

You should see that all asbestos-containing materials identified for removal were completely removed. All areas where the contractor performed work should have no material left behind. For example, if pipe insulation was removed, carefully inspect the pipe in hard-to-reach/see places (e.g., top of the pipe, around the joints and elbows, etc.). Look under all non-moveable objects to the extent possible such as under the hot water tanks, under furnaces, under cabinet overhangs, inside small storage rooms or closets, on top of furnace ducting, etc.

Request that the contractor provide you with copies of the following documentation:

- ◆ Laboratory results/reports for air sampling performed on the project.
- ◆ Asbestos Waste Disposal Manifest(s) specific to your project address.