



ON THE AIR

Fall
2009

A Newsletter about
Clean Air. Provided
by Spokane Regional
Clean Air Agency.

Asbestos, Not Just in “Popcorn” Ceilings

Being Aware is All About Your Health

by Simone Ramel, Communications Specialist

Asbestos is the general term given to six natural, fibrous, silicate minerals. It is derived from a Greek word that means “inextinguishable.” For commercial use, the minerals are milled and separated into very thin fibers used in a wide variety of products.

Asbestos was used extensively in homes built before 1970. In 1970, the Clean Air Act gave the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the ability to regulate this mineral. Although Asbestos was banned in certain products by the EPA from 1973-1978, and Asbestos is no longer mined in the United States, there are still numerous products containing these minerals. Asbestos is still being imported and used in manufacturing. Unfortunately, the importation of these minerals is not regulated at this time.

Some of these products could exist in your home—

even if built after 1970. If you are doing any type of repair, renovation, remodel or demolition, it is critical to your health to test for Asbestos.

Roof repair, linoleum or tile removal, vermiculite removal, removal of carpet

potentially causing serious illness such as Asbestosis, Mesothelioma and/or Lung Cancer.

If a contractor is doing work at your house, he or she is required by law to check for Asbestos. If they fail to do so, it could result in a fine

materials such as fireproofing (banned in 1973), pre-molded insulation (banned in 1976), and popcorn/decorative ceilings (banned in 1978). Many of us are probably familiar with the term “popcorn ceiling.” It is the most recognized form of Asbestos, but what we may

not know are all the other products that may contain Asbestos.

Current products, unless they specifically state “Asbestos Free,” the term “Asbestos”

is not what is listed. The ingredient(s) listed could be Natural Mineral Fibers, Magnesium Silicate or types of Asbestos such as Actinolite, Amosite, Anthophyllite, Chrysotile, Crocidolite, and/or Tremolite. The most common are Amosite and Chrysotile.

It’s important to be aware of what to look for before you make a purchase.

Asbestos is still being imported into the U.S. and used in manufacturing.

over existing tile are just a few of the repairs or renovations that could result in your exposure to Asbestos. The Asbestos could exist in the product you are removing and/or in the product that is new.

Once Asbestos becomes airborne, these tiny fibers are nearly invisible to the naked eye and can remain in the air for a long time. The result is the possibility of inhaling these fine particles,

and potentially slow down your project. If you are doing the work yourself, again, it is a matter of your health—having your home tested is reasonable and worth every penny. Fact sheets and a list of labs that provide this service are available on our website under Asbestos. It is listed in the menu on our home page.

In terms of products, the primary products that were banned were sprayed on

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Asbestos...

continued from cover page

The following products may contain Asbestos. Note: inside the () is the percent of Asbestos that could be found in the product.

- Roofing and Flooring Felts (85%)
- Packings and Gaskets (90%)
- Sealants, Adhesives, Mastics and Paints (30%)
- Floor Tiles (30%)
- Auto brakes, Mufflers and Transmission Disks (80%)
- Asbestos Cement Pipes (30%)
- Corrugated Sheets for Pipe Wrap (85%)
- Millboard and Roll Board (95%)
- Spray On Insulation
- Filters Used in Beverage Making
- Insulation on Wires, Appliances
- Road Surfacing and Pavement
- Shotgun Shell Base Wads
- Cooling Tower Fill

If you don't want products containing Asbestos, look for the items that say "Asbestos Free" or check the ingredients. In addition, notify your local hardware stores that you want product choices that do not contain any Asbestos.

If you have questions about Asbestos, please check our website or contact one of our experts here at Spokane Clean Air. And remember, *It's All About Your Health!*

www.spokanecleanair.org
(509) 477-4727

It All Starts with the Asbestos Survey... Age of Structure Not a Factor

Inspectors with the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency regularly see compliance issues when it comes to Asbestos regulations.

If you or someone you know is involved in any type of building remodeling, renovation or demolition, please read this and pass it along.

This information is also pertinent to building owners, apartment complex managers, etc., who hire contractors to re-roof or do any other renovations. If a contractor is out of compliance, violations can be assessed to building owners and managers too.

Below is information focused on three routinely found Asbestos compliance issues. There are other issues but most of them result from failing to meet requirements in these three areas:

#1 Compliance Issue: Failing to Obtain an Asbestos Survey

Here are just a few examples of what our inspectors hear:

"What's a Survey?"

"We didn't think we needed to get a survey performed since it's a new building."

"We didn't get a survey done because we don't think there are any Asbestos-Containing Materials being disturbed."

An Asbestos survey is the identification and testing of suspect Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACM) in or on a structure prior to a remodel, renovation or demolition. In most cases, the survey must be done by an accredited AHERA Building Inspector.

It makes no difference how old or new the structure is, an Asbestos survey must be completed. And, the final note about the Asbestos survey—it doesn't matter if you think Asbestos is present or not, you've got to show proof by having a survey completed and posting it on-site for inspection.

#2 Compliance Issue: Not Submitting a Notice of Intent

A Notice of Intent must be submitted to Spokane Clean Air before a contractor removes Asbestos. Also, prior to any demolition a Notice of Intent must be submitted.

#3 Compliance Issue: I own the building and I am doing the renovation work myself so these rules don't apply to me.

If it is a home you own and live in as your primary residence and you're doing the work yourself, then you don't have to hire a certified AHERA Building Inspector to conduct an Asbestos survey. But, everyone has to follow the rules for handling and disposing of Asbestos legally and a survey is the only way to find out if you have Asbestos-Containing Materials.

Rules for the proper handling, removal and disposal of Asbestos are in place to protect people from unknowingly being exposed to microscopic Asbestos fibers.

There are stiff fines for improperly removing and disposing of Asbestos.

Asbestos information is online at www.spokanecleanair.org/asbestos.asp or call 477-4727.

Working Together to Reduce Harmful Wood Smoke

Sitting next to a warm fire may seem appealing, but its warm glow has a downside. Wood smoke is a complex mixture of gases and particles. When inhaled, these tiny particles can easily bypass filters in your nose and throat, and penetrate deep into your lungs. Epidemiological studies have linked exposure to particles to loss of lung function, bronchitis, lung disease, heart attacks and premature death.

Air quality affects all of us.

One chimney may seem inconsequential, but when multiplied by all the fireplaces and woodstoves across our area, it constitutes a lot of air pollution. In fact, wood burning is the chief source of wintertime air pollution. On an average winter day, up to 3/4 of particulate pollution comes from wood burning stoves, fireplaces and fireplace inserts.

Today's devices are much cleaner...when used properly.

Older wood burning stoves and fireplaces emit far more air pollution than new models. However, it's important to note that you can operate a new stove improperly, resulting in excessive chimney smoke. Excessive chimney smoke is unlawful and can result in fines.

Reduce your heating needs.

The best way to reduce emissions is to not light a fire at all. Keep warm by adding insulation to your attic, caulking leaks or weather-stripping doors, windows and pipes. Weatherization tips are available at www.everylittlebit.com.

Tips to burn a cleaner, more efficient fire, saving you money and our air.

- Wood should be cut, split, stacked and covered to dry at least 12 months before burning. Burning wood that is not seasoned properly emits more smoke, and wastes wood and your money.
- Never burn treated wood, plastic, magazines, paper, gift wrap, cardboard or trash. These materials emit chemicals when burned. The only fuel you may burn is dry, natural firewood or manufactured logs and pellets.
- Start your fire using small pieces of wood. Keep the stove door slightly open for about one minute to help the fire burn strongly before closing and latching it.
- Start small, load it with one piece as needed instead of loading it with several large pieces at once.
- Be sure not to close the air control damper too much.
- Go outside and check your chimney - if it's dark, take a flashlight. After a 20-minute start-up, only heat waves or a wisp of smoke should be visible. If you see more than this, you need to open the damper and provide more air to your fire.
- Don't burn when Spokane Clean Air issues a burn ban. That's when air pollution is expected to exceed health-based air quality standards. For current burning conditions, call 477-4710 or visit www.spokanecleanair.org.

Over 90 tons of pollutants cut annually:

Wood Stove Changeout Program

Over the last two heating seasons, Spokane Clean Air has teamed up with state and federal agencies to improve air quality by replacing old, inefficient and dirty wood stoves and inserts with cleaner wood, pellet or gas devices.

From January 2008 to June 2009 a 215 qualified homeowners took advantage of \$400 - \$800 rebates to replace their old wood stoves.

Of the 215 devices changed out, 139 were replaced with new, more efficient wood stoves and 76 were replaced with even cleaner, efficient natural gas devices. Based on this, the combined **emissions reduction is 93.84 tons annually!**

Unfortunately, grants were not awarded this year to Spokane Clean Air to continue this program. But, it still pays to replace your old wood stove. Just ask Gregory Rahn of Spokane.

Rahn replaced his old stove from the late 1970s with a natural gas stove. He says that he doesn't miss chopping and storing the wood, and has noticed a marked improvement in the air quality in his home.

According to Rahn, "it is an investment well made, a welcome cost for convenience and health."

AIR QUALITY CALENDAR

- Nov. 5: Board of Directors meeting, 9 a.m, Spokane Clean Air's office, 3104 E. Augusta Avenue. Monthly meeting agendas available online at www.spokanecleanair.org.
- Dec. 3 Board of Directors meeting, details above.
- Jan. 7: Board of Directors meeting, details above.

Spokane Clean Air in the Community

Our agency has a long history of supporting local community events by attending as many as possible. Each event is an opportunity to interact with the public by sharing information about our agency's programs and services, and receiving feedback.

At Earth Day we debuted our new "trivia prize wheel" (pictured below), which has been popular with children.



Simone Ramel of Spokane Clean Air, quizzes a participant at Kids' Day

In addition to Earth Day, Spokane Clean Air staff attended several other community events and trade shows this year including Arbor Day, Kids' Day, Home Shows, the Spokane Interstate Fair, Valleyfest, the Car Care Fair and the Fall Leaf Festival at Finch Arboretum.

If you come across the "clean air booth" at one of these events, please stop and spin the prize wheel...you might just win a prize!

Businesses Recognized

About 650 businesses are registered with Spokane Clean Air, from large industrial-type facilities to small "mom & pop" shops like dry cleaners, furniture refinishers and autobody shops.

To encourage compliance with air quality regulations, Spokane Clean Air recognizes businesses that meet minimum requirements (Silver Award) and those that go "beyond compliance" (Gold Award).

Businesses nominate themselves for recognition and this year there were 109 businesses that met the silver or gold level. On the right are the Gold Level businesses. To see the entire list, go to www.spokanecleanair.org/business_recognition.asp.

2009-2010

Gold Level Recipients:

- Central Pre-Mix (3 sites)
- Columbia Paint
- Contemporary Fiberglass
- Custom Painting
- Cylinder Head Service
- Dishman Dodge
- Ed's Premier Auto Body
- PAML
- Inland Asphalt
- Interstate Concrete
- Itron
- Sonderen Packaging
- Western Concrete

Take Note!

On the Air is a publication of the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency. Its purpose is to inform local residents on all aspects of outdoor air pollution. Please contact Lisa Woodard, *Editor*, with comments or story ideas: Phone: (509) 477-4727, ext. # 115 Email: lwoodard@spokanecleanair.org

Contact Information:

Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency:
(509) 477-4727

Burning Information:
(509) 477-4710

Air Quality Index:
(509) 477-2571

Address:

3104 E. Augusta Ave.
Spokane, WA 99207

Web Address:
www.spokanecleanair.org

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This newsletter is also available at www.spokanecleanair.org.

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3104 E. Augusta Ave.
Spokane, WA 99207

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