



Your Essential Connection

QuickTips

Developed by AIHA
in support of the OSHA Alliance



For Job Health and Safety on Care of Asbestos-Containing Flooring Material

What to do today to protect worker health and prevent health hazards

What is the hazard?

- Many resilient floor tiles contain asbestos.
- Although it is possible that new floor tiles many contains some or trace amounts, floor tiles installed prior to 1980 should be presumed to contain asbestos.
- When asbestos floor tiles are abraded, minute asbestos fibers are released into the air and can get trapped in the lungs. Asbestos is a known human carcinogen with no known safe threshold of exposure.

How do I know there is a hazard?

- Asbestos containing materials cannot be identified by the age of the material or by visual observation. A piece of the material must be sent to a reputable laboratory where it is analyzed for asbestos by transmission electron microscopy.
- The equipment used on the floor has a high abrasive pad that runs at high speeds, thus creating airborne asbestos fibers

Why should I care?

- Airborne asbestos fibers are very small and cannot be seen by normal vision. Inhaling asbestos fibers can cause lung cancer – inhaling asbestos fibers and being exposed to tobacco smoke, greatly increases the risk of lung cancer
- Inhaling asbestos fibers can also lead to cancer of the lining of the lungs or the abdomen, which is always fatal.

What do I need to do?

Training

- Provide initial and annual awareness training which include at least the health effects of asbestos, location of asbestos containing and presumed asbestos materials, recognition of damage and deterioration of asbestos containing materials, requirements of OSHA's Asbestos Standard (29 CFR 1910.1001) pertaining to housekeeping, and proper response to fiber release episodes.
- Provide training on not sanding resilient flooring, use of low abrasion pads, operation of buffers at speeds lower than 300 rpm, and use of wet methods.
- Provide instruction that burnishing or dry buffing may only be performed on asbestos-containing flooring, which has sufficient finish so that the pad cannot contact the asbestos-containing material.

When do I need to do it?

Inspections

- Identify flooring which is likely to contain asbestos-containing material and either confirms its presence through laboratory analysis, or presume it contains asbestos and treat it as such.
- Post warning signs/labels in areas frequented by housekeepers to warn them of the presence of asbestos

Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and notification records • All exposure monitoring records • Medical monitoring records if exposures mandate medical monitoring (i.e., exposures likely above the permissible exposure level (PEL) of 0.1 f/cc TWA.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None should be needed if floor care follows requirements identified during training.

When do I need more help?

- Selection of laboratories to test and confirm presence of asbestos containing floor tiles
- Selection of appropriate floor care equipment and supplies

Where can I get help?

- Go to AIHA's website www.aiha.org for help in selecting testing laboratories
 - Go to manufacturers for information on selection of appropriate equipment and supplies.
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