Purpose
This focus sheet is to provide information to organizational departments that perform building maintenance and alterations, to help them understand their responsibility for preventing exposures to asbestos and meeting regulatory requirements for asbestos. Departments performing these services must develop and maintain a Building Asbestos Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Program, with oversight responsibility assigned to a specific employee.

Background
Laws require that building managers protect employees and occupants from exposures to asbestos (see below). Asbestos may be found in many types of building materials on campus, including floor tiles, floor sheeting, pipe insulation, laboratory fume hoods, fireproofing, wallboard joint compound, and glues and mastics. Materials containing asbestos are commonly referred to as asbestos-containing material or ACM.

Intact and well-maintained ACM poses no health hazard to building occupants. Asbestos is a carcinogen that causes lung cancer and mesothelioma and it is hazardous to workers and to others when it gets into the air and is inhaled. This can happen during construction and renovation projects. Examples of projects where ACM could be disturbed are: running cables above ceiling tiles containing asbestos, drilling holes in drywall with joint compound containing asbestos, and removing carpet from asbestos-containing floor tiles, among others.

Operations and Maintenance Program
An Operations and Maintenance (O&M) program, also known as an Asbestos Management Plan, is a formulated plan of training, cleaning, work practices, and surveillance to maintain asbestos-containing materials (ACM) within buildings in good condition. The goal is to minimize exposure of all building occupants to asbestos fibers. The O&M program should include work practices to: 1) maintain ACM in good condition, 2) ensure proper cleanup of asbestos fibers previously released, 3) prevent further releases of asbestos fibers, and 4) monitor the condition of ACM.

Such a plan is required and helps assure that procedures are in place for routine building maintenance as well as project work, (either direct or though contract), that appropriately account for asbestos. There is no institutional University of Washington O&M plan but some units (e.g., Facilities Services) have effective plans in place that could be shared and tailored to meet another department’s needs.
An effective and compliant O&M Plan should have the following elements:

1. **Asbestos Program Manager (APM)** – Designate a departmental person who is responsible for managing asbestos in the building or department. This contact person will ensure the responsibilities of the department are properly implemented.

2. **Asbestos Inspection (“Good Faith Survey”)** – Ensure an accredited AHERA Building Inspector conduct any assessment of presumed or any other suspected asbestos materials before they may be handled as non-asbestos materials. The Regulated Material Management Office (RMMO) manages survey results for most buildings on campus (phone: 5-3357). All materials should be assumed to be asbestos containing unless tested and shown to be otherwise.

3. **Training** – Provides required training for custodial and maintenance workers. Provides staff with asbestos-awareness training. Ensures that trained and licensed professionals perform inspections and respond appropriately.

4. **Occupant Notification** – Describe the actions taken (e.g., signs, labels, information sessions, written notices) by the department to notify occupants, building workers, tenants, and others about the location and physical condition of asbestos-containing materials.

5. **Monitoring Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACM)** – Discuss in the plan how to inspect the condition of asbestos-containing material (ACM) and additional measures to prevent exposure. The APM should establish appropriate monitoring and re-inspection intervals.

6. **Job-Site Controls for Work Involving Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACM)** – Identify a system (such as permits or work orders) to document all work that could disturb asbestos-containing material. Determine whether ACM is present in the area where work will occur to develop work practices for specific work.

7. **Safe Work Practices** – Describe procedures and techniques to minimize the risk of disturbing asbestos-containing material and ensure worker protection and safety of building occupants. Techniques may include use of personal protective equipment, wet methods, mini enclosures, isolation, etc. Procedures should be in place in the case of asbestos fibers being released.

8. **Recordkeeping** – Provide information on federal requirements and recommendations for documenting asbestos building management, including inspection reports, O&M project plans, and fiber release reports.


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