

ASBESTOS: AN OVERVIEW

An overview of a regulated building material

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a fibrous silicate mineral that was used in 3,000 building products for its fire resistance, heat/cold properties, tensile strength, chemical resistance and other properties.

If asbestos containing materials are left intact, they pose no health risk to building occupants. However, there can be health risks to a person who inhales asbestos fibers upon damage to the asbestos-containing materials.

Damage to asbestos-containing materials can release asbestos fibers into the air which pose a potential inhalation hazard. Asbestos fibers are invisible to the naked eye and cannot be detected by odor, irritation, nor cause sneezing. For more information about asbestos in building products, refer to the focus sheet [Asbestos in UW Buildings](#).

UW Environmental Health & Safety has established [policies and guidelines](#) to manage and control asbestos at the UW and associated facilities.



SAFETY RESOURCES

The following resources are available for more information:

- [Asbestos General Awareness - Online](#)
A training course that is required for all University personnel
- [Administrative Policy Statement \(APS\) 12.1](#)
Outlines general responsibilities of University organizational units in managing asbestos and other regulated building materials
- [UW Asbestos Management Plan \(PDF\)](#)
Establishes policy and procedures for maintaining and managing asbestos-containing material (ACM) at the University
- [Installing Equipment, Furnishings and Fixtures in UW Buildings \(PDF\)](#)
Provides guidance for installing furniture, equipment and fixtures in University buildings
- [Prevent Asbestos Exposure and Protect Floor Tiles \(PDF\)](#)
Describes practices to reduce potential exposure to asbestos by avoiding damaging building materials and surfaces
- [Asbestos Restricted Areas List \(PDF\)](#)
Lists restricted areas where asbestos has been identified

Visit the [Asbestos and Other Regulated Building Materials](#) webpage or contact EH&S at 206.543.7388 for more information.