

## OSHA–Asbestos Standard

On August 10, 1994 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published its final rule on occupational exposure to asbestos: 29 CFR parts 1910.1001 (for general industry), 1915.1001 (for shipyards) and 1926.1101 (for construction industry).

Highlights of the Standards include the following:

- Airborne fiber concentrations are limited to 0.1 fiber/cubic centimeter (f/cc) for an 8-hr TWA (time weighted average) and a short term limit of 1.0 f/cc for a period not in excess of 30 min.
- Employers are required to monitor the exposure of each employee who may reasonably be expected to be exposed at or above the airborne limits.
- Regulated areas must be established whenever asbestos is being disturbed in a manner that could result in airborne concentrations at or above the limits.
- Compliance programs are required, showing how the employer will use engineering controls and work practices to prevent exposures in excess of the limits.
- Respiratory protection and protective work clothing are required to reduce exposures and prevent the spread of asbestos contamination outside regulated areas.
- Hygiene facilities for washing and changing clothes must be provided for employees entering or exiting asbestoscontaminated areas.
- Hazard Communication provisions require employers to provide training, labels and signs to inform potentially exposed workers or occupants about the danger of asbestos and how to prevent exposure.
- Housekeeping requirements are stated that provide ways to clean and maintain areas where asbestos debris or dust may be present, as well as methods for caring for flooring materials which contain asbestos.
- Medical surveillance is specified for all employees who are or will be exposed to airborne asbestos fibers at or above the limits previously stated.
- Record keeping is required and must include items such as exposure measurement data, medical surveillance records, training documentation and information used to claim exemptions.
- Under the construction industry standard, all construction worksites must have a designated competent person who has the qualifications to ensure worker safety and health, and compliance with the standards. Also, under the construction standard, on multi-employer worksites, an employer performing tasks that require the establishment of a regulated area must notify all other employers on the worksite of these activities and the actions that will be taken to prevent worker exposures.

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- Before work covered under the standard is begun, building owners and facility managers must identify the presence, location and quantity of asbestos materials in the work area and notify the following parties:
  1. Prospective employers whose employees would be working in or adjacent to the asbestos materials;
  2. The owner's employees who will be working in or adjacent to the asbestos;
  3. All employers of employees who will be working in or adjacent to the asbestos-containing materials; and
  4. Tenants who will occupy these areas.
- Building owners also must post asbestos warning signs at the entrance to mechanical rooms or other areas where asbestos-containing surfacing materials or thermal system insulation is present.
- Workers involved with asbestos-related activities are classified as follows:
  1. Class I Workers who are involved with removal of asbestos-containing surfacing material or thermal system insulation;
  2. Class II Workers who are involved with removal of all other types of asbestos materials such as wall board, floor tile, and mastics;
  3. Class III Workers who perform maintenance and repair tasks that are likely to disturb asbestos insulation or surfacing material; and
  4. Class IV Workers who perform maintenance and janitorial duties in which they might contact, but not disturb, asbestos-containing material such as dust or debris.
- Training requirements for workers involved with asbestos-related activities are as follows:
  1. Class I and II Workers – EPA asbestos abatement workers training (4 day program).
  2. Class III Workers–EPA operations and maintenance workers training (16 hour program).
  3. Class IV Workers–asbestos containing materials hazard awareness training (2 hour program)

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301 E. Fourth Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202 F13503D-LP (01/13)

