



## Asbestos

### What is asbestos and how is it regulated?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that can be separated into fibers. There are six types of asbestos minerals: amosite, chrysotile, crocidolite, and the fibrous varieties of tremolite, actinolite, and anthophyllite. Chrysotile (white asbestos) constitutes about 95 percent of asbestos used in building products. The primary laws governing asbestos are the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), the Clean Air Act (CAA), and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

### Where is asbestos found?

Asbestos minerals are found in large natural mineral deposits or as contaminants in such minerals as chrysotile, vermiculite, and talc. Asbestos was most commonly used as building insulation and was utilized in building materials such as floor and ceiling tile, cement pipe, corrugated paper pipe wrap, acoustical and decorative insulation, pipe and boiler insulation, and spray-applied fire-proofing. These materials are collectively referred to as Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM).

### When does asbestos become a health risk?

Intact and undisturbed ACM generally do not pose a health risk. ACM, however, can become hazardous when, due to damage or deterioration over time, fibers are released. Invisible to the naked eye, asbestos fibers pose a potential human health risk when they become airborne. Friable asbestos, which is ACM that can be crumbled or reduced to powder by hand pressure, poses a particular hazard. Health risks vary upon level of exposure and are primarily associated with occupational exposure.

### What is the Landholding Agency's (LHA's) asbestos responsibility when reporting property excess to GSA?

The LHA is responsible for identifying whether the property has any known ACM incorporated in the construction, repair, or alteration of any improvements on the property based on available information. The LHA must provide full disclosure of all asbestos-related information in the Excess Real Property Checklist, the due diligence supplement to the Standard Form 118.

### What information should the LHA submit with the Excess Real Property Checklist?

The LHA should identify whether there is known ACM on the property. If ACM is present in buildings on the

property, Section 102-75.125 of the Federal Management Regulations (FMR) requires the LHA to identify the following asbestos-related information and provide all available supporting documentation:

- Type of ACM (e.g., friable or non-friable)
- Description of its location (e.g., in steam pipe insulation, in floor tiles, and/or in building siding, etc.)
- Condition (e.g., damaged or undamaged)
- Control methods taken, including any known time or cost estimates (e.g., encapsulation, enclosure, or removal)

This information can often be found in asbestos surveys, operation and maintenance plans, and building contracting documents. The LHA is not required to conduct any specific studies and/or tests to obtain this information

A known release of asbestos into the environment (e.g., buried in a landfill on the property) may qualify as a hazardous substance release under CERCLA. If released into the environment, the ACM should be noted on GSA's Hazardous Substance Activity Certification in the Excess Real Property Checklist.

### What is GSA's role as the disposal agent?

Prior to disposal, GSA is responsible for verifying the asbestos-related information provided by the LHA. GSA will ensure the required asbestos notice from FMR Section 102-75.335 and all available information regarding asbestos on the property are included in any Invitation for Bid, Offer to Purchase, Assignment Letter, or deed for the subject property.

### Can the GSA dispose of property with ACM?

Yes, GSA may convey property with ACM (including friable asbestos) in "as is" condition. The LHA is not required to remove or abate asbestos prior to reporting property excess or prior to property conveyance. However, the LHA must inform GSA of all hazardous materials in order to protect the general public from hazards and to limit the Government's liability resulting from disposal or mishandling of hazardous materials.

### Where can I find additional asbestos information?

**EPA:** <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/asbestos/>

**OSHA:** <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/asbestos/>

**ATSDR:** <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/Asbestos/>