# Toolbox Talk Training: Hazardous Substance Awareness – Asbestos

Asbestos is a group of minerals resistant to heat and corrosion. OSHA identifies past uses in pipe insulation, floor tiles, building materials, and vehicle brakes and clutches. Construction and ship-repair exposures can occur during removal of asbestos materials in renovation, repair, or demolition. Older installed materials may still present an asbestos hazard; appearance alone is not a reliable clearance to disturb them.

OSHA explains that asbestos fibers associated with health risks are too small to see with the naked eye. Breathing asbestos fibers can cause asbestosis, a buildup of scar-like lung tissue with loss of lung function. Asbestos also causes lung cancer and mesothelioma. A material's appearance does not establish the airborne exposure level.

For construction work covered by 1926.1101, building owners and employers have duties under paragraph (k) to identify and communicate the presence, location, and quantity of asbestos-containing material (ACM) and presumed asbestos-containing material (PACM) before work. Specified thermal-system insulation, surfacing material, and older flooring must be treated as asbestos-containing unless the standard's rebuttal requirements are met. Employees performing Class I through IV asbestos operations must receive the training required by paragraph (k)(9); a toolbox talk alone is not that training.

For operations covered by 1926.1101, paragraph (g)(1) requires specified HEPA-vacuum, wet-method, and waste-cleanup practices, subject to its stated exceptions, including roofing provisions and demonstrated wet-method infeasibility. Additional controls depend on the work class and conditions. Respirators, protective clothing, and decontamination must meet paragraphs (h), (i), and (j) where applicable. Contaminated clothing must be transported in sealed impermeable bags or other closed impermeable containers and labeled as required. Have the employer and competent person establish the procedures for the actual operation before work.

Being near a labeled material does not establish your airborne exposure level. For construction operations covered by 1926.1101, a competent person must assess expected exposure immediately before or at the start of the operation under 1926.1101(f)(2). Follow the controls and monitoring requirements that apply to the work. OSHA states that there is no safe level of asbestos exposure; meeting a permissible exposure limit does not mean there is no health risk.

If you have questions or concerns regarding asbestos hazards or exposure, contact your supervisor, safety manager, or another designated workplace representative. Thank you for participating in today’s toolbox talk, and please remember to sign the sign-in form to receive attendance credit.

*General safety information only. This material does not replace required training, a site-specific hazard assessment, or professional safety advice. Before using it, verify current requirements with OSHA (osha.gov) and your employer. Follow applicable regulations, equipment manufacturers’ instructions, and your employer’s safety procedures.*

*Sources: OSHA asbestos overview: osha.gov/asbestos; 1926.1101(f),(g),(h),(i),(j),(k).*

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# TOOLBOX TALK TRAINING SIGN-IN FORM

**Topic discussed: Hazardous Substance Awareness - Asbestos**

Company Name:_____ Date:_____

Discussion led by:_____

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*Signatures record attendance only, not certification or completion of required training.*

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