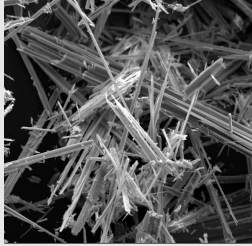


DATE: 9/9/2022

TOOLBOX TALK

# ASBESTOS



Asbestos fibers under a microscope



Asbestos is the best insulator known to man. It is also virtually indestructible making it useful for fireproofing.

## What is Asbestos?

- Asbestos is a mineral fiber.
- It can be positively identified only with a special type of microscope.
- There are several types of asbestos fibers.
- In the past, asbestos was added to a variety of products to strengthen them and provide heat insulation and fire resistance.
- Asbestos tends to break into tiny fibers
- Some fibers may be up to 700 times smaller than a human hair
- Despite being a known carcinogen, asbestos is not banned

## Asbestos Containing Building Materials

- Cement pipe, boards, sheets, plastics
- Clay compounds, paints, plasters
- Floor tiles
- Pipe covering and insulation

## Safe or Unsafe?

Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) are safe and commonly used in construction. These materials only become dangerous when they are broken, weathered, or disturbed.

When an ACM is in good condition, the asbestos is contained and therefore not a hazard. When broken, asbestos may be released in the air (friable), causing health hazards.

Report these conditions immediately to the Facilities Safety & Risk Office.

## Health Effects

1. Mesothelioma - a fatal lung cancer
2. Other lung cancers
3. Asbestosis - buildup of scar tissue in the lungs which may make breathing difficult

## Your Best Protection is Awareness

There are forms of PPE which are useful for protection from asbestos, however, even the best PPE cannot totally isolate you from potential harm. For this reason, whenever situations arise in which asbestos hazards are present, SUU hires out specialized contractors to abate the hazards.

**When you are aware of potential asbestos hazards you are in control of your risk of exposure.**

The Facilities Safety & Risk Management Office maintains an online database for all campus Hazardous Materials Surveys, organized by building. These surveys can be found on the SUU Enterprise Risk Management website:

[www.suu.edu/erm](http://www.suu.edu/erm) > Environmental & Occupational Safety > Hazardous Materials > Hazardous Materials Surveys for University owned Buildings.

**FACILITIES  
MANAGEMENT  
SAFETY & RISK**

385 South 1275  
West Cedar City,  
UT 84720  
(435) 865-8141