Policy on Asbestos Management

Introduction

Asbestos and its derivatives were extensively used as building materials in the UK from the 1950s through to the mid-1980s. It was used for a variety of purposes and was ideal for fireproofing and insulation. Any building built before 2000 (houses, factories, offices, schools, hospitals etc) may contain asbestos.

Asbestos material may also be found in older domestic appliances containing heating elements i.e. electrical fires and storage heaters, some laboratory equipment, cookers, hairdryers, irons etc. For disposal purposes, these must be dismantled in controlled circumstances or disposed of as complete units under asbestos-related legislation. Typical situations where asbestos may have been used in older equipment can be found at Appendix 1:

The presence of asbestos does not in itself give rise to any danger provided that it is in good condition, with the protective coating intact. A hazard only arises when asbestos is disturbed, for example, during maintenance work, such as drilling holes with power tools, sawing or sanding material in such a way that asbestos dust is released into the air and can be inhaled. Working near to material containing asbestos might result in disturbance, particularly if it is in poor condition. Accidental damage, wear and tear or vandalism can release fibres from the asbestos containing materials (ACMs), for example in walls, ceilings and floor coverings.

When fibres are inhaled they can cause serious diseases which are currently responsible for around 4000 deaths a year. There are three main diseases that can be caused by uncontrolled exposure to asbestos: mesothelioma (which is always fatal), lung cancer (high fatality rate) and asbestosis (not always fatal, but it can be very debilitating). The health effects may take as many as twenty years to manifest.

The University of Glasgow, as a responsible employer, recognises the risks associated with asbestos and aims to protect employees and others from being exposed to asbestos, so far as is reasonably practicable, either by elimination of asbestos from buildings, or by minimising exposure through the use of suitable and sufficient control measures and work methods, supported by appropriate training of employees. The University undertakes to allocate suitable resources for the implementation of these duties. These measures will form the basis of the University’s Asbestos Management Plan.
Responsibilities

Principal

The Principal has overall strategic responsibility for the management of health, safety and wellbeing within the University of Glasgow, including, so far as is reasonably practicable, the allocation of suitable resources by which to achieve this.

Secretary of Court

The Secretary of Court, as Director of University Services, has oversight of the University’s support services, including the Estate as well as the Health, Safety & Wellbeing agenda. Responsibilities include:

1. the appointment of suitable competent persons to direct these activities
2. ensuring that matters requiring consideration by Court or the Senior Management Group are brought to their attention as necessary through the most appropriate mechanism, in order that decisions concerning resources and strategic priority may be made.

Operational responsibilities for the management of asbestos, detailed below, sit primarily, but not exclusively, with the Director of Estates, in their capacity as the strategic manager of the University’s estate and all the maintenance and repair of the buildings within the estate. Responsibility for the provision of competent advice and guidance on the statutory duties of the University in relation to asbestos lies with the Director of Health, Safety & Wellbeing in their capacity as the strategic manager of the University’s competent advisers in occupational health and safety.

Director of Estates:

1. Bringing to the attention of the Senior Management Group, ‘Court’ or other suitable Court Committee the resource requirement associated with implementing the Asbestos Management Plan.
2. Appointment of suitable competent person(s) to act in a co-ordination role to ensure appropriate management of asbestos.
3. Put in place suitable systems to ensure the gathering of accurate information on the asbestos content of buildings, including type, location and risk assessment, through appropriate surveys.
4. Ensure arrangements are in place for the collation of all the pertinent information arising from asbestos surveys into an asbestos register that is accessible to those who plan or initiate maintenance and repair of the estate, maintaining, reviewing and updating the information as necessary.
5. Ensure that the Asbestos Register can be made accessible to those agencies who may require to disturb the fabric of a University of Glasgow building in the event of an emergency –such as the Fire and Rescue Services.
6. Develop and oversee, subject to suitable available resource, the delivery of an Asbestos Management Plan that details the proposed measures for ensuring the safe condition of asbestos within the estate, through removal, encapsulation or other remedial measures, and the continued monitoring of this condition over time.
7. Ongoing management through the development and implementation of suitable protocols to ensure that disturbance of asbestos is minimised, remedial action is taken timeously and carried out by only such persons as are competent to do so.

8. Ensuring buyers of property from the University of Glasgow are made aware of the nature and location of any asbestos present in the buildings being purchased.

9. Ensuring tenants of University of Glasgow property are made aware of the requirement to notify Estates and Buildings of any planned work which might disturb the fabric of the building or of accidental disturbance to the fabric of the building.

**Director of Health, Safety & Wellbeing:**

1. Provision of competent advice on the statutory aspects of the management of asbestos.
2. Provision of competent advice on the statutory environmental aspects of the disposal of asbestos-containing materials and equipment.
3. Management of a suitable incident reporting system to enable reporting of incidents involving the unintentional release of asbestos fibres.
4. Provision or sourcing of appropriate training for relevant employees as required.
5. Provision of competent Occupational Health support and advice in relation to the health aspects associated with asbestos exposure.

**Heads of College/ University Services**

1. Ensuring, through their College Management Groups and Health & Safety Committees, that areas under their control have in place the necessary local arrangements to protect employees and others working in or visiting the University from exposure to Asbestos.

**Heads of School/ Directors of Research Institutes/ Heads of Service**

1. Identify, with assistance and guidance from Estates & Buildings as appropriate, all plant/ equipment under their control containing asbestos components.
2. Ensure asbestos-containing plant/ equipment is maintained in good repair, that repairs are only carried out by competent persons and that disposal of damaged or surplus plant/ equipment is through a waste stream suitable for the disposal of the asbestos component(s), as advised by the Environmental Adviser.
3. Implement suitable arrangements to ensure that all staff notify Estates & Buildings of any activity that requires disturbance to the fabric of the building (or has resulted in accidental disturbance), in order that the Asbestos Register may be consulted for information on the presence of any asbestos, and any necessary precautions adopted to both minimise the release of fibres and also prevent any persons being exposed to asbestos fibres.
4. Ensure that, in situations where the School or Research Institute is a tenant in buildings belonging to another body, that employees located there are aware of the Landlord’s requirements in respect of the Management of Asbestos and know who to contact under circumstances where the building fabric requires to be disturbed or is accidentally disturbed.
5. Ensure that employees are aware of the need to ensure that all known potential exposures to asbestos should be reported through the accident reporting system.

As Principal I have overall accountability for health, safety and wellbeing within the University of Glasgow. The members of the Principal’s Senior Management Group have the responsibility for operational implementation of this policy and associated procedures throughout the Colleges and University Services. The Secretary of Court has devolved responsibility to oversee this process through the Director of Health, Safety & Wellbeing and the Director of Estates. The review of these documents will be through the Health & Safety Committee and as such will be monitored and overseen by the Convener(s) of this committee.

Signature:

Convener of Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee
Review Date:
Appendix 1

Some examples of older equipment likely to contain asbestos

1) lagging, tapes, rope, corrugated paper, quilts, felts and blankets used as thermal insulation for pipes, boilers, pressure vessels, calorifiers, etc
2) millboard used for heat insulation and fire protection in switchgear
3) insulation board, generally used in building materials but also in acoustic attenuators
4) paper, felt and cardboard for electrical/heat insulation of electrical equipment, wiring etc, or acoustic linings in air handling equipment; duct and pipe insulation
5) ropes and yarns used as lagging, jointing, packing materials for heat resistance or fire protection, plaited tubing in some electrical cable
6) cloth used as thermal insulation and lagging, including blankets, mattresses, protective curtains, gloves, aprons, overalls (sometimes aluminised to reflect heat)
7) gaskets and washers
8) strings eg for sealing hot water radiators
9) friction products eg resin-based materials used in brakes and clutch plates
10) drive belts and conveyor belts
11) fully compressed flat sheet eg laboratory worktops
12) reinforced plastic or resin composites eg laboratory worktops
13) cement products in flue pipes, extractor hoods
14) bituminous products eg used in underseals

Director Health, Safety & Wellbeing