

Demolition/Renovation Asbestos Inspection Requirements

Commonly Asked Questions for Commercial/Public Buildings And Buildings Housing 5 or more Dwelling Units or Leased/Rental Units

Question: My reno/demo project is in a library building. Do I need to hire an inspector to perform an inspection for asbestos before I can begin the work?

Response: Yes. Public and Industrial use buildings are considered commercial. This means a Maine certified/licensed Asbestos Inspector must perform an inspection for asbestos-containing material (ACM) prior to commencement of work. If asbestos is identified removal by a Maine licensed Asbestos Contractor is required. In addition the project must be notified according to Maine asbestos regulations. This applies to all commercial buildings regardless of age unless documents exist that show no asbestos is present, such as a previous inspection report or letter from an architect verifying that no asbestos materials were used in the building construction.

Note: In lieu of any required inspection you may assume suspect material to be positive for asbestos and have it removed accordingly. You may never assume material to be non-asbestos.

Question: I am renovating a single family dwelling that was at one time used for commercial purposes. Do I need to have the building inspected?

Response: Yes. If the single family dwelling is currently or has ever been used as a commercial, government, daycare, office, church, charitable or other non-profit place of business it must be inspected as above.

Single family residences that were never used for commercial purposes, and residential dwellings constructed after 1980 that consist of two (2) to four (4) units, are exempt from the inspection requirement of Maine's Asbestos Regulations; however home owners should conduct a walk through of the building to identify any suspect asbestos-containing building materials. Homeowners are responsible for any disturbance of ACM in amounts greater than 3 square or 3 linear feet. If suspect material is found the homeowner should contact the Maine DEP, a licensed asbestos consultant or contractor for help.

Question: I am renovating an apartment building that has less than 5 units. Do I need to hire a state licensed inspection company?

Response: If the building was constructed before 1981 and consists of 2 to 4 dwelling units or leased/rental units you may do one of the following:

- Have an inspection for ACM performed by a Maine licensed Asbestos Inspector, or
- Have the inspection performed by a person familiar with ACM (such as a code enforcement officer or building inspector), or
- You may assume any suspect material to be asbestos and have those materials removed in accordance with state rules.

Question: What are suspect ACM materials?

Response: Suspect asbestos-containing building materials include thermal system insulation, ceiling tile, exterior cementitious siding, rigid panels, attic and wall insulation, vinyl floor tile and resilient floor covering (linoleum). Specific building materials that do not require inspection, sampling, and analysis for asbestos include: wood, fiberglass, glass, plastic, metal, laminates, and gypsum board when joint compound was used only as a filler and not as a layered component, and exterior caulking and glazings.

Question: Are there any other materials regulated in Maine that must be removed from a building prior to demolition?

Response: Any identified hazardous waste and other universal wastes should be part of any pre-demolition site assessment and cleanup phase. For instance it is illegal to dispose of PCB's and mercury-containing products in Maine. Fluorescent light fixtures made before 1980 contain a ballast that has PCB's in it. The most common mercury-containing products found in buildings are thermostats and fluorescent light bulbs. Check the Maine DEP website at www.maine.gov/dep/rwm/hazardouswaste/pdf/urwrecyclingcompanies.pdf for locations and businesses that will recycle these "universal wastes."

If you have any questions on asbestos, or state and federal asbestos regulations, please call the DEP's Lead & Asbestos Hazard Prevention Program at (207) 287-2651.

An up-to-date list of DEP-licensed asbestos contractors and consultants is available from the department by calling (207) 287-2651 or on the internet at www.maine.gov.