East Central Catholic Schools	**Safe Work Guideline** Asbestos Guidelines		
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What is asbestos and where is it found?

Asbestos is the name given to a group of naturally occurring minerals. Until the mid-1980's, asbestos had widespread commercial use in a wide range of products. Asbestos containing materials (ACM) are found in most schools prior to the mid 1980's. Types of asbestos are Chrysotile (most common), Amosite, Crocidolite, Tremolite, Anthophyllite and Actinolite.

In Schools and district facilities ACM are commonly found:

- Above drop ceilings as sprayed-on fireproofing or as an exposed acoustical insulation;
- On pipe and boiler insulation in mechanical rooms and crawlspaces;
- In flooring (e.g. vinyl floor tiles, linoleum) including floors that may be underneath carpets;
- In acoustical ceiling tiles (2x2 or 2x4 lay in type) and textured ceilings;
- In woven materials on openings for boilers, packing for pumps and fire blankets;
- In plasters, drywall jointing, floor leveling compounds;
- In incandescent light fixture backings, panels on perimeter heating cabinets;
- In exterior sidings panels, roofing materials and felts;
- In transit board that may be present under paint or paper on walls, ceilings and cabinets; and
- In science labs, e.g. oven mitts, hot plate screens, fume hood backing and asbestos rocks.

What are the health effects of asbestos and how do you get exposed?

Asbestos fibers can cause diseases such as asbestosis, lung cancer and a rare form of cancer called mesothelioma. These diseases primarily affect the lungs and are difficult to treat. To cause disease, asbestos fibers must be inhaled in sufficient amounts for long enough periods of time. The risk of developing an asbestos related disease increases as the amount and length of exposure increases. It takes many years for asbestos-related diseases to develop. As long as the material is in good condition and not altered so it becomes airborne, ACM poses little health risk.

How do you determine if ACM presents a hazard?

All asbestos materials pose a potential risk of exposure. If the condition or location of the material presents a potential for fiber release then there is a higher risk of exposure. If ACM are altered through building maintenance or becomes physically damaged, asbestos fibers can be released into the air. In well-bonded materials such as ACM countertops, asbestos fibers can become airborne if the materials are cut, scraped or sanded. Water damage, building renovations, and activities such as painting of ACM textured ceilings or ceiling tiles also cause the release of asbestos fibers. The mere presence of ACM in a building does not represent a health hazard to building occupants. Unless large amounts of ACM are disturbed (such as occurs during asbestos abatement activities) airborne exposures are unlikely to exceed the allowable occupational exposure limits. A few cracked or broken floor tiles, small surface areas of damaged pipe insulation or ceiling tiles or minor disturbances are unlikely to

create significant exposures of concern; however they should be reported as soon as possible to Facilities Maintenance so the risk of exposure can be assessed and the appropriate action taken.

Is air sampling required to determine if my school or building is safe?

Routine air sampling for asbestos in buildings that contain ACM is not recommended or required by regulatory authorities, since it is not an effective method to determine whether or not an area poses a health hazard. The current sampling methods for asbestos have several limitations which make it an ineffective tool for this purpose. Air sampling should never replace the need for following safe work practices and periodic physical inspection of ACM to ensure it remains in good condition. It can however be a valuable tool used during some maintenance and renovation activities that involve major disturbances of ACM.

How can staff prevent the exposure to asbestos?

****is there a list somewhere for each facility as to where ACM is located? ****

If you are unsure whether a material contains asbestos or if a work activities puts you at risk of exposure, LEAVE THE MATERIAL ALONE and notify your supervisor or administrator as soon as possible. If the material is in good condition it poses little risk of asbestos fiber release. The best option is often to leave the material intact until such time as building maintenance or renovations are scheduled. If water or physical contact damages the ACM, the material must be repaired, cleaned up or removed as soon as possible by workers trained and equipped for asbestos abatement. Also ensure that, if a job requires disturbing layers of materials hidden under paint, carpets, floors, walls, etc., fallen onto the floor or furniture DO NOT DISTURB and leave the room. Immediately report the situation so that trained Facilities Maintenance Services staff can be brought in to assess the situation and conduct the clean-up safely.

Who can work with asbestos containing materials?

Only district staff and approved contract staff who have the proper personal protective equipment, special training and safe work procedures that minimize the release of asbestos fibers, can be involved in cleaning, maintenance and/or renovation activities that might disturb asbestos. Safe work procedures for working with or around asbestos are to be followed.

What steps are involved in asbestos removal or abatement?

Asbestos abatement is hazardous work and must be left to properly trained Facilities Maintenance staff or an asbestos abatement contractor approved by Facilities Maintenance. Situations where removal may be required include renovations, minor maintenance activities, and if the asbestos material is severely damaged and cannot be repaired. The first step requires cordoning off the area to prevent further disruption. In some cases the building ventilation system may need to be shut down. Repair may involve encapsulation or covering the ACM. Encapsulation means coating the ACM so that asbestos fibers are sealed in. This process is only effective for some

types of ACM. If materials are soft, crumbly, or otherwise damaged, sealing is not appropriate. Covering involves placing something like plywood over or around the material that contains asbestos to prevent the release of fibers.

What can administration do to protect their staff, students and other building occupants?

The most effective way to control exposure to asbestos and to determine that ACM are being properly managed is to ensure that building occupants and workers (including contractors) are aware of the location of the ACM and that activities conducted around these materials are done in a manner that minimize the release of asbestos. It is also important to repair or remove broken or damaged ACM when it is discovered. Site administrators should:

- Discuss with staff, and other building occupants such as volunteers, contractors, tenants and rental groups the location of known and suspected ACM in the facility.
- Ask staff and building occupants to immediately report any signs of damage, deterioration or unsafe work practices that may involve known or suspected ACM.
- Ensure staff and building occupants are aware of work, activities or student behaviors that can disturb ACM (e.g. painting of asbestos containing ceiling tiles or student behaviors such as throwing items at asbestos ceilings are prohibited). No staff member or contractor shall conduct any work that could potentially disturb or expose themselves to ACM unless they are properly trained in safe work procedures for asbestos.