

ASBESTOS HAZARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACT Training Requirement for Custodial/Maintenance Staff



Have you received the asbestos information and training that you are entitled to? Your school district is required by the federal government to provide information to you about where the asbestos is in your school and training to help you avoid exposure during custodial and maintenance activities.

Asbestos is often mixed with other materials such as plaster, putties or insulation to serve as fire proofing. In schools, building materials that commonly contain asbestos are:

- Structural fire proofing
- Pipe and Boiler Insulation
- Acoustical Plaster
- Ceiling and floor tiles
- Putties, chinks, paints and cements



School maintenance and custodial workers can come in contact with these potentially asbestos-containing materials while performing routine tasks such as cleaning, wiring, and pipe or boiler repair.

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What Information and Training Must the School District Provide?

Two Hour Awareness Training

Even if you are not required to work directly with the asbestos in the building, you must receive at least two hours of asbestos awareness training. This training must include information on:

- The nature of asbestos and its many forms
- The health effects associated with asbestos exposure
- The location of asbestos-containing materials in school buildings where the workers being trained may work
- How to recognize damage or deterioration of asbestos-containing building material
- The name and telephone number of the designated school district person to handle asbestos-related matters

14 Hour Additional Training

School maintenance and custodial workers who perform *any* activities that will disturb asbestos in a building must receive an additional fourteen hours of training. For example if your work involves drilling holes in plaster containing asbestos or fire doors with asbestos cores, cutting through insulation, replacing broken vinyl/asbestos floor tiles or any other work activity that brings you in contact with asbestos, you must be trained by your school district in the fourteen hour training.

At a minimum, the 14-hour training must include:

- A description of the proper methods of handling materials that contain asbestos
- Instruction on proper respirator use for filtering out asbestos
- Opportunities for hands-on training in the use of respirators, other protective equipment, proper work practices for handling asbestos-containing materials
- Information about laws and regulations that apply to school workers
- An explanation of the asbestos management plan developed for your school

What Kind of Asbestos Work Can I Do After Training?

After fourteen hour training, the school district can only assign you to perform asbestos maintenance and repair jobs that are “small scale” and “short duration” in nature and then only if they provide you with the proper equipment.

Small scale, short duration asbestos work can only be performed if it is necessary to carry out another maintenance activity. Some examples include removal of asbestos-containing insulation around a section of pipe, replacement of a small section of dry wall, installation of electrical conduit through or near asbestos-containing building material.

The school district may not have you do work that is intended solely as asbestos removal. The only exception is cleaning up “minor emergencies” which are accidents involving three feet (linear or square) or less of asbestos. Certified asbestos abatement workers must be called in for emergencies involving more asbestos or for any removal jobs.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates asbestos in schools. However, through the EPA Worker Protection Rule, EPA extends OSHA asbestos standard coverage to school employees not now protected by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Therefore, even if your school district must not now comply with all OSHA regulations, it must adhere to the asbestos standard.

For more information about the OSHA asbestos standard and asbestos operations and maintenance procedures, contact the AFT Health and Safety Program at 800-238-1133 Ext. 5674.