

ASBESTOS & LEAD PAINT AWARENESS

Toolbox Talk



SUMMARY OF ASBESTOS & LEAD PAINT

Asbestos and lead are two hazardous materials commonly found in older buildings and construction materials. Asbestos, used for its heat resistance and strength, can release microscopic fibers when disturbed, which may lodge in the lungs and cause serious illnesses like asbestosis, lung cancer, and mesothelioma – often decades after exposure. Lead, once widely used in paints and plumbing, poses severe health risks when its dust or chips are inhaled or ingested, leading to damage to the nervous system, kidneys, and reproductive organs.

Both hazards are invisible to the naked eye and can remain in the environment for years, making awareness and proper handling critical. Always follow safety protocols: never disturb suspect materials, report damaged surfaces, and use appropriate PPE when working in older structures. Protecting yourself and others starts with recognizing these risks and taking preventive action.

ASBESTOS AWARENESS

- What is Asbestos?
 - A group of minerals resistant to heat and corrosion, used in building materials before 1980.
 - Main type: Chrysotile (white asbestos) – 95% of U.S. use.
- Hazards:
 - Damaged asbestos releases fibers into the air.
 - Fibers can be inhaled, lodge in lungs, and are invisible to the eye.
- Where Found:
 - Pipe insulation, spray-on fireproofing, shingles, siding, joint compound, 9"x9" floor tiles, mastics, caulking.
- Health Risks:
 - Symptoms appear 10–40 years later.
 - Causes lung scarring, cancer (lungs, larynx, colon, ovaries).

LEAD AWARENESS

- What is Lead?
 - A soft, dense metal used in paints, pipes, batteries, and shielding.
 - Lead-based paint: Common before 1978.
- Hazards:
 - Lead dust and chips contaminate air, water, and soil.
 - Can remain in the body for years.
- Where Found:
 - Paint on windows, doors, trim, floors, ceilings.
- Health Risks:
 - Damages nervous system, heart, kidneys, and reproductive system.
 - Long-term exposure increases cancer risk.
 - Symptoms: headaches, cramps, fatigue, trouble sleeping.

PROTECT YOUR LUNGS AND HEALTH – NEVER DISTURB UNKNOWN BUILDING MATERIALS.