

# WORK-RELATED ASBESTOS HAZARDS FACTSHEET

## WHAT IS ASBESTOS, AND WHAT ARE POSSIBLE HEALTH EFFECTS FROM ASBESTOS EXPOSURE?

Asbestos, a known human carcinogen, is a group of mineral fibers that can be found naturally in rocks and soil. It was widely used in building supplies and in the automotive, railroad, and shipping industries due to its' resistance to heat and corrosion. The fibers are too small to be seen with the naked eye and can be released into the air and breathed in when asbestos-containing materials are disturbed. Breathing in asbestos may lead to the development of diseases, such as asbestosis (scarring of the lungs); hardening of lung tissue; lung cancer or mesothelioma (cancer in the lining of the lungs or stomach). Symptoms of asbestos-related diseases may take 10 to 20 years or longer to develop after exposure to asbestos, and smoking can increase your chances of getting lung cancer. These diseases are incurable and often lead to death. Treatment for asbestosis involves supportive care to help ease the symptoms of the disease, but the lungs remain permanently scarred. Being exposed to asbestos does not mean that you will have health problems from the exposure; however, prevention is the best measure.

## WHO DO I CONTACT IF I MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS WHILE WORKING?

Repairing, renovating, and removing building materials or automotive parts that may potentially contain asbestos may disturb the fibers and release them into the air. Contact your doctor if you have been involved in these activities and are concerned that you may have been exposed to asbestos.

The [Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality](#) (LDEQ) regulates how contractors must identify and properly remove asbestos-containing materials in schools and state buildings. Complaints about potential work-related exposures to asbestos and other hazards can be filed confidentially with the federal [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA). Additional information about asbestos exposure is available from the [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#) (ATSDR) and the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA).

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