



**CHET HOLIFIELD FEDERAL BUILDING
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
December 16, 2016**

1. Is the building safe to occupy?

The air sampling results for the Chet Holifield Federal Building continue to indicate there is no recognized health hazard in the areas sampled at this property. The building remains safe to occupy.

2. What is the history of the asbestos in the Chet Holifield Federal Building?

The Chet Holifield Federal Building (CHFB) has asbestos containing fireproofing, which was required and commonly installed at the time the building was built. The material was sprayed on the first floor ceiling deck under the roof areas, and, although over the years most has been removed, some remains. It is maintained in place, as allowed by law, using the proper work practices and hazard control procedures. Asbestos can also be found in some of the floor tiles and mastic, pipe insulation, and in some joint compound throughout the building.

3. Why type of activity would disturb the asbestos above the ceiling?

The type of activity causing asbestos to be airborne is typically a mechanical action such as grinding and sanding, or any type of heavy duty turbulence or friction.

4. Is the asbestos circulated into the office space by the ventilation system or through gaps in the ceiling system?

Under normal daily operating conditions, the air within the office space is drawn into the plenum (space between the structural ceiling and the dropped ceiling), which is under negative pressure, or a lower pressure, therefore no air within the plenum directly flows into the occupied space of the building without first being filtered. All of the air supplied through the ceiling vents is drawn from outside the building and mixed with filtered recirculated building air.

5. What are the actions taken after an earthquake to ensure the asbestos has not been disturbed?

Depending on the magnitude, location, and impact of the event, GSA will perform inspections and follow proper procedures as outlined in the O&M procedures.

6. Why did the testing indicate high readings on upper floors if asbestos containing fireproofing only remains on the first and second floors?

GSA is currently conducting a more extensive survey of the building to investigate the high readings above the plenum in some areas. The air sampling results for the Chet Holifield Federal Building continue to indicate there is no recognized health hazard in the areas sampled at this property. The building remains safe to occupy. GSA is conducting studies to stabilize and resolve asbestos containing materials (ACM) in the building. GSA will continue to share survey results with tenants.

7. How can I obtain information regarding asbestos and the status of asbestos in the building?

There are a number of reliable resources on the web, such as the CDC/NIOSH and OSHA, to obtain information on asbestos. GSA has also established the Chet Holifield Federal Building webpage, gsa.gov/chetholifield, and reading room as a repository for the most current and past tenant updates. The Federal Occupational Health air sampling report, dated July 22, 2016, is posted in the reading room. GSA will continue to share the latest information for access by building tenants.

8. What are the short term and long term plans to remove the asbestos in the building?

Mitigate - This stage is currently in progress. The scope includes addressing the immediate concerns including clean-up, monitoring, investigation, planning, communication and removal of asbestos.

Stabilize - The scope for this stage includes focusing on asbestos removal primarily on the first floor. GSA requested funding for this stage. If the request is approved, work will begin in late 2017 and is scheduled for completion in 2020.

Resolve - The scope for this portion is for infrastructure and building systems upgrades including seismic (ensures building is in compliance with current earthquake resistant codes). ACM will be removed, or encapsulated, if removal is not feasible. GSA will request funding for this stage in 2017. If the request is approved, work will begin in 2020 and is scheduled for completion in 2024.

9. Who manages the medical screening and surveillance program?

The program is managed by the employing agencies and governed by OSHA (Occupancy Safety and Health Administration).

10. Will occupants in the building be tested for potential exposure?

The air sampling results, which are available on the Chet Holifield Federal Building webpage, www.gsa.gov/chetholifield, continue to indicate that they do not pose an unacceptable risk to human health and the environment. The building remains safe to occupy.

11. When is air testing performed during a construction project in an area containing asbestos?

Air testing is performed whenever work is being performed under containment due to the presence of asbestos. Once the area is contained and under negative pressure, the area outside of the containment is continually tested while work is being performed. Once the project is completed, a visual inspection of debris and a final air test is performed prior to the removal of the containment.

12. How often will air sampling be performed in the building?

For the short term, air sampling will be performed every three months. The final report for each round of testing will be shared with the tenants in the CHFB Update and on the CHFB website, www.gsa.gov/chetholifield. The frequency will be reevaluated once the stabilization phase is completed or based on the test results.

13. What is the protocol for working inside a contained area?

Only those individuals that have the required training and certification are allowed to work inside a contained area. The training requirements are to be consistent with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) training requirements as set forth at 40 CFR 763.92(a)(2).

14. What is the procedure for working above the ceiling?

In order to adhere to the ACM Operation and Maintenance Plan and to ensure the safety of the building tenants, all work above the ceiling is required to be coordinated with GSA and conducted in containment. Ceiling tiles are not to be opened, removed or moved in any manner in order to prevent disturbing potential ACM above the ceiling.

15. What are the procedures if cleaning is necessary?

If cleaning is necessary, the area will be cleaned by wiping down or vacuuming (with a HEPA filter) horizontal surfaces. The work is performed under containment with a third party environmental company oversight to clear the area prior to removal of the containment.

16. How do you know that an area where work under containment took place is now safe to occupy?

GSA hires a contractor qualified to perform work under containment. In addition, GSA hires a third party environmental consulting firm to oversee the project to ensure work is performed properly. The environmental consulting firm also takes air samples around the work area throughout the project. A final clearance test is taken prior to the removal of the containment and occupancy of the space.

17. What do I do if I see dust in my workplace?

Dust accumulation is normal in any building. If you believe there is an abnormal amount of dust in your area, contact GSA to clean the area.