

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Special operating procedures are required in the event of an emergency situation that causes an immediate release of airborne fibers due to disturbance of asbestos-containing materials. These operating procedures are required to limit, to the extent possible, contamination of the building environment and thus reduce the potential for asbestos fibers becoming airborne. There are many situations that may cause a fiber release. The following are the most common causes of fiber release episodes.

1. Fire.
2. Extensive water damage from roof leaks, pipe failure, or other means.
3. Construction procedures causing excessive vibrations such as coring, jack hammering, or vibration from other mechanical devices.
4. Improperly executed renovations or remodeling activities.
5. Earthquake, structural failure, or other catastrophic event.

Fiber Release Episode – Initial Response

In the event of a fiber release episode, or when it is recognized that a fiber release episode may occur, the regional facility staff member or on-site office manager will notify the FACM and Asbestos Response Team. The Asbestos Response Team is comprised of the members of the maintenance staff who have received 16-hour O&M training and have received medical clearance from a doctor to wear a respirator. The regional facility staff member and/or on-site office manager will proceed to the scene and take charge of the asbestos-related issues until duly relieved. If the fiber release episode is caused by a catastrophic event such as an earthquake or structural failure, the building is not to be entered until the structural integrity of the building has been assessed and the building has been deemed safe to enter. After the Asbestos Response Team has arrived at the site, the following procedures shall be performed:

1. Provide for appropriate worker protection including respirators and protective clothing.
2. If feasible, stop the cause of the contamination such as stopping the renovation work or stopping the pipe leak.
3. Turn off the air handling system in the affected area.
4. Vacate all personnel and occupants from the immediate contaminated area.
5. Isolate the affected area by closing all doors leading to the area.
6. Construct air-tight seals (critical barriers) around doors, windows, and other penetrations that lead into the contaminated area.

After the area has been isolated, the FACM or asbestos consultant will perform an assessment of the contamination to determine its severity. Asbestos fiber release episodes typically fall into two categories: small-scale and large-scale fiber release episodes. The following minimum responses are provided for each type of fiber release episode.

Small-Scale Fiber Release Episodes

Small-scale fiber release episodes typically involve three square feet of asbestos debris or less. A licensed asbestos abatement contractor will perform cleanup of small-scale fiber releases. The following minimum procedures shall be followed when responding to small-scale fiber release episodes, however, the FACM or asbestos consultant should evaluate the fiber release episode prior to the initiation of cleanup procedures. All of these procedures should be performed following implementation of the initial response procedures listed above.

1. Place asbestos warning signs on the entrance to the affected area.
2. Enter the work area wearing proper worker protection including respirators and protective clothing.
3. Perform cleanup of the debris using a combination of HEPA vacuums and wet wiping techniques. For friable surfacing materials and thermal system insulation, the material should be lightly misted with water prior to initiating cleanup.
4. Place all waste into properly labeled asbestos waste bags. A second waste bag shall be placed over the first bag.
5. Once the cleanup has been completed, an asbestos consultant shall collect clearance air samples from the interior of the affected area. Clearance will be achieved when the air samples indicate an airborne fiber concentration inside of the area less than 0.01 fibers per cubic centimeter.
6. After air clearance is achieved, the warning signs and critical barriers can be removed and the air handling system restored.

Large-Scale Fiber Release Episodes

Large-scale fiber release episodes involve greater than three square feet of asbestos debris. A licensed asbestos abatement contractor should perform cleanup of large-scale fiber release episodes. The following minimum procedures shall be followed when responding to a large-scale fiber release episode, however, the FACM or asbestos consultant should evaluate the fiber release episode prior to the initiation of cleanup procedures. All of these procedures should be performed following implementation of the initial response procedures listed above.

1. Depending on the size and severity of the release, the abatement contractor may be required to notify the South Coast Air Quality Management District. In all cases, the abatement contractor is required to notify Cal-OSHA.
2. Place asbestos warning signs on the entrance to the affected area.
3. Place a decontamination unit at the entrance to the affected area.
4. Enter the work area wearing proper worker protection including respirators and protective clothing.
5. Place the affected area under negative pressure using fan units equipped with HEPA filters. A sufficient quantity of units should be provided to provide a minimum of four air exchanges per hour. The fan units should be exhausted to the exterior of the building if feasible.
6. Perform cleanup of the debris using a combination of HEPA vacuums and wet wiping techniques. For friable surfacing materials and thermal system insulation, the material should be lightly misted with water prior to initiating cleanup.
7. Place all waste into properly labeled asbestos waste bags. A second waste bag shall be placed over the first bag.
8. Once the cleanup has been completed, an asbestos consultant shall collect clearance air samples from the interior of the affected area. Clearance will be achieved when the air samples indicate an airborne fiber concentration inside of the area less than 0.01 fibers per cubic centimeter.
9. After air clearance is achieved, the warning signs and critical barriers can be removed and the air handling system restored.

After each emergency asbestos-related response has been completed, an abatement summary form should be completed and filed.