

Asbestos Sampling - Top 10 Questions

1. Why do we sample?

- a. EPA and State agencies clearly state that regardless of the age of the structure all suspect building materials must be tested for asbestos before demolition or renovation.
- b. OSHA clearly states that it is the employer's responsibility to inform all employees of any hazardous conditions. The only way to know what an employee may be exposed to is testing.
- c. EPA also clearly states, that unless the situation is immediate to life and health you must sample regardless of if it is a catastrophic event or not.

2. What should we sample?

- a. All suspect materials. This includes any man-made product that asbestos could have been added during the manufacturing process. This includes but not limited to products like floor tile, mastic/glue, dry wall, textured popcorn or paint, joint compound, window caulk, roofing, felt paper, duct insulation, pipe insulation, cove base glue, sheet flooring, light weight concrete, Transite siding, Transite flue pipes, Transite shingles, Transite wall panels, boiler insulation, vermiculite insulation, etc. Basically, if it is not wood, metal, pink fiberglass, yellow fiberglass, glass (excluding glazing), or rubber insulation it must be tested.

3. What is a Homogenous area?

- a. The EPA defines a homogenous material as a material that is like in color and texture. If all the material is the same color and texture it can be considered homogenous. If not, it must be tested as a separate material.
 - For example, if you have 10 apartments and 3 have orange peel texture, 3 have sand texture and 4 have no texture, you have 3 separate homogenous areas and all should be tested using the 3-5-7 method.

4. Who is authorized to take a sample?

- a. An inspector must have current federal and state accredited training and hold a current state inspector license to take samples. You must ensure that the inspector and company are licensed in the state you are working in.
- b. The inspector should provide you with a chain of custody, lab results, and a copy of their current state training and certification.

5. How many samples should be taken?

- a. Blusky follows the EPA recommendations of 3-5-7. If less than 1,000sf, 3 samples are taken. From 1,000sf - 5000sf, 5 samples are taken. For areas greater than 5,000sf, 7 samples are taken. This is the minimum number of samples that should be taken of each homogeneous area. If the area is complex and there is evidence that multiple rebuilds have taken place, more samples should be taken.

6. Where do we send the samples?

- a. Samples should be taken to a National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) or American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) accredited laboratory. Some states like Texas and Louisiana require a state endorsement.

7. What do we do when the samples are positive for asbestos?

- a. Notify a Blusky Regional Director of Environmental Services or a local abatement contractor if directed to do so by Environmental Services.
- b. Provide them with the laboratory results, chain of custody and a description of the demolition or renovation that will be conducted.

8. What should we do if the samples are less than 1% of asbestos containing material?

- a. Many people believe that less than 1% is equivalent to a negative. This is **not** true. The EPA only regulates material greater than 1% but OSHA regulates worker exposure and does not care what the percent of asbestos is in a material. OSHA and multiple states still requires that the material be removed using Class II methods, as defined in OSHA 29 CFR 1926.1101.

9. What do we do if multiple samples are negative and 1 is positive?

- a. If multiple samples of a material were taken and 1 sample is positive, all samples must be considered positive until additional testing is done to isolate areas that might be negative.
 - For example, if there are 10 apartment units. The popcorn ceiling in all units look to be homogeneous. The inspector tests 5 units and only 1 tested positive. You must either consider all the units as positive or go back and retest each unit using the 3-5-7 rule in order to be considered negative.

10. What are the penalties if we do not test? Can I personally be held responsible if the state or OSHA visits our site?

- b. Yes, in some states you can personally be held responsible. Most states and Federal laws are a \$10,000 fine per day, per person, per event, and possibly imprisonment. Some states like TX are \$25,000 fine per day, per person, per event, and up to two years in prison.
- c. Many states will also add the cost savings by not testing to the fine as well.
 - For example, if you would have treated the material as asbestos and the cost was \$500,000 for removal and by removing the material as construction debris, you saved \$250,000. The \$250,000 savings would be added to the fine