

A Safe Workplace

A Workplace Safety and Health Manual for Your Community

Section: III-F	Rules Procedures, Practices and Guidelines	Page 1 of 2
		Approved By: Harvey Bostrom
Subject: SWP-7	Asbestos and Vermiculite Exposure	Effective: December 31, 2007
		Revised: April 1, 2011

Refer to part 37 of *The Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulations*, Guideline for Working with Asbestos.

Asbestos Exposure

Asbestos is a mineral with long fibres that can be separated into thin threads. Asbestos fibres are heat resistant and do not conduct electricity. It is used as an insulator and a barrier to corrosive chemicals and has been used for a wide range of manufactured goods in industries such as:

Construction (i.e. roofing shingles, ceiling and floor tiles, paper products, asbestos cement products, paints, insulation)

Automotive (i.e. clutch, gaskets, brake and transmission parts)

Textiles (i.e., heat-resistant blankets and curtains, fire-resistant clothing)

When asbestos fibres are firmly bonded or encased in a material and cannot be released into the air, they are generally safe. When these materials break down, asbestos fibres can be released into the environment. This may occur during product use or during repair or demolition work which requires sanding, grinding, ripping or cutting.

Breathing asbestos fibres into your lungs increases your risk of developing several diseases, mainly related to the respiratory system (nose, mouth, throat, and lungs). The risk of getting these diseases depends on how long you are exposed, and how much asbestos is in the air of the work environment.

Vermiculite Exposure

Vermiculite is a mineral used in a number of consumer products, including home insulation. Some vermiculite produced at Libby Mine in Montana from the 1920s until 1990, sold primarily under the brand name Zonolite®, has been found to contain asbestos. While not all vermiculite produced before 1990 contains asbestos fibres, it is reasonable to assume that if a building has older vermiculite-based insulation, it may contain some asbestos.

Employees should not disturb or handle any potential material containing asbestos or vermiculite. In workplaces where employees believe that there may be a risk of asbestos or vermiculite exposure, a professional should be contacted regarding the safe removal. Service providers can be found in the Yellow Pages under Asbestos Abatement/removal.

Note additional information can be found on the Department of Labour and Immigration website safemanitoba.com in the [Guidelines for Working With Asbestos](#).

A Safe Workplace
A Workplace Safety and Health Manual for Your Community

Section: III-F	Rules Procedures, Practices and Guidelines	Page 2 of 2
		Approved By: Harvey Bostrom
Subject: SWP-7	Asbestos and Vermiculite Exposure	Effective: December 31, 2007
		Revised: April 1, 2011