Supervisor Instructions for Discovery of Disturbed Building Materials (that contain or unknown if contains asbestos)
Non-Emergency and Emergency Situations

Supervisors are responsible for the health and safety of those they direct (see CCR, Title 8, section 3203 Injury and Illness Prevention Program, title 2.0, authority and responsibility, supervisors). To comply, a supervisor needs to be familiar with areas in their building that contain asbestos. This responsibility includes advising all their employees, (including students and anyone else who receives a paycheck from the University) asbestos is present in the building* they work in and asbestos is only a hazard if it is disturbed and friable. (Friable means material becomes dust with natural hand pressure). The supervisor shall inform employees if they discover either previously damaged building materials or if the event just happened, they need to report the situation immediately to their supervisor.

Emergency Actions (if damage or disturbance just occurred).

If a suspect building material that may contain asbestos* is disturbed, stop work, notify other area occupants, leave area careful not disturb material further and initially secure area as best as possible so others are alerted no one can enters (Lock, person standing guard, caution tape, sign, etc.).

Immediately notify the Supervisor of the area (and if this is another area you are doing work in you should notify your supervisor as well).

The area supervisor shall immediately contact the Environmental Health and Safety office at x 5-4139. If no response, call University police at X 5-3333. Do not leave on a voice message or email to report, make sure this is immediately reported to a live person.

Then contact the necessary individual(s) designated by your department that should be notified of emergencies, letting them know there is a possible emergency situation regarding asbestos fiber release, you evacuated occupants, closed area, and called then necessary response personnel.

If it’s determined the area may be closed longer than an hour, post the area. The sign should say: “NO ADMITTANCE”, Please contact (Supervisor Name and their contact phone number) if access is required to make arrangements.

Non-emergencies: Actions if damage discovered but did not just occur.

The supervisor shall assess the situation to assure the damage did not just take place and situation is not considered an emergency (immediate threat to life, environment or property). If non emergency, the situation shall be reported right away to Facilities Management. They will review the information you provide. Depending on the situation, material, etc., they may come to the location right away or they may wait to come over. It will be up to Facilities to assess and determine what course of action (if any) needs to be taken and how to repair the area if needed.

To report situations to Facilities, call x 5-4444 during normal business hours. If after their normal business hours, submit an online work order and follow up with a call the first business morning after to assure the work order is prioritized.

The supervisor should also report the situation to the campus asbestos manager by email with a brief description including location, material damaged, who noticed and when possible how the damage may have happened and when. When possible send a copy of the completed work order to the asbestos manager.

*Information on whether a building material does or does not contain asbestos for items that have been tested will be found in the tables “Asbestos Locations by Building” found under the most recent Asbestos notification information on the EHS web page or in the annual “Asbestos Notification” document posted in departments.

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Additional Information if area closed due to Potential Asbestos Fiber Release:

It will be the area supervisor shall be the primary supervisor designated to work with Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) until the situation is resolved.

Because there are persons that feel they have very important reasons to enter the area after evacuation, even just to retrieve materials in the room, the supervisor may need to inform them that the room is closed for an investigation, and no one other than EHS personnel and other response personnel is allowed to enter the area at the present time. They will be informed once the investigation is completed that the room is cleared (it is not up to the supervisor to give a reason except that the supervisor is following administrative directions). Those that have further concerns should contact the EHS official. The supervisor will be advised approximately how long the area may be closed, and will need to find alternative work spaces for those displaced. Just because their work space is evacuated, this is not an acceptable reason to leave the work place without permission and being docked for time.

The supervisor will need to compose a brief report including a list of known persons who have been in the area since the discovery, and those who may have been in there before the situation was reported, when and why the material was discovered, who discovered the situation, if work had or was scheduled to take place, include a description of the condition of the area prior to discovery as well as other details they feel may be prudent. They should provide this report to the EHS official and one to Human Resources workers comp coordinator. (At minimum the situation needs to be addressed as why the building material was left in a damaged state, and who may have been responsible for the damage, even if its determined no asbestos is present. Often situations are caused by an outside contractor who will need to come back to do repairs).

If the EHS official determines it is not definitive if the material in question contains asbestos and feels further sampling is warranted, the room shall remain posted until official results are returned from the sampling lab. If the EHS official determines from their expertise and review of available data that there is a minimal chance the material could contain asbestos, then the room shall remain posted with the “No Admittance” sign only, to prevent any further disturbance of the material until sample results return to confirm its composition. At this point, since the likelihood the material would be further disturbed, thus not creating a situation where if it were asbestos, fibers could not be released, there would be no need to shut off the ventilation system for the area. Nor would it be prudent at this time to notify employees of a potential exposure and cause them undue stress since if a potential exposure were to have occurred, it would have already taken place, and if we don’t know its asbestos, we cannot post as such.

If there is a discovery of a material where definitive data was not available, but the EHS official feels there is reason to believe the material is asbestos then a similar protocol will be followed.