

PROCEDURE: Removing Naturally Occurring Asbestos from County Infrastructure

This policy applies to removing sediment and debris containing naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) associated with flooded roadways, bridges, and levees within the Swift Creek and Sumas River watersheds. All activity related to removal will follow established County, State and Federal requirements for handling asbestos containing materials. (WAC 296-62-077)

1. An assessment must be made regarding the extent of removal necessary

- The Director or designee will evaluate the area of sediment and debris deposition and determine the scope of necessary work.
- The schedule and scope of work will be designed to minimize employee exposure to NOA.

2. If removal operations are necessary, then appropriate “wet methods” will be used

- Asbestos containing material (ACM) must be handled, removed, or otherwise worked in a wet, saturated state to prevent the emission of airborne asbestos fibers.
- Where wet methods are unfeasible, Whatcom County employees will stop work immediately.
- Methods of wetting the creek beds and roadways can include rain, water hoses, and/or water trucks.

3. NOA sediment and debris will be maintained within the inundated area(s)

- Inundated areas shall be demarcated (signs, barricades, flagging, etc.) to minimize the number of persons within the area.
- Sediment and debris containing NOA will be maintained in or nearby the inundated area to prevent unmanaged spread of the material.

4. Decontamination of equipment and personnel will occur at the site to limit employee and public exposure

- Employees and equipment will enter and exit the inundated area through pre-defined ingress and egress locations.
- Employees shall remove all gross contamination and debris from their protective clothing and any equipment leaving the area.
- Wet methods will be used for decontamination of all equipment.
- If equipment is hauling asbestos containing materials, the outer surfaces will be cleaned before leaving the regulated area and interior storage cleaned once material is removed.

5. Employees will be trained in appropriate NOA handling and removal procedures, including proper PPE and decontamination procedures

The Safety and Training Specialist, or competent designee, will train employees on:

- i. Health effects of asbestos exposure (including the importance of smoking cessation),
- ii. Prohibited practices (dry methods),
- iii. Operations which could result in exposure above the PEL,
- iv. Engineering controls,
- v. Work practices (including decontamination procedures), and
- vi. Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements.

6. Initial and periodic air monitoring may be required for the duration of the removal work

- The Department will evaluate the potential for exposure and schedule initial and periodic monitoring (using methods Described in WAC 296-62-077 Appendix A).
- Historical monitoring results from similar work activities may be used (WAC 296-62-07709).
- Initial monitoring, if required, will be performed by the Safety and Training Specialist or designee at the initiation of each job.
- Initial and periodic monitoring must be performed if there is any change in the process, equipment, conditions etc.

7. Engineering controls will be used when feasible

- Alternative methods should be considered prior to the start of any work where there is a potential for asbestos exposure.
- Wet methods must be used.

8. Removal of waste to storage sites requires special provisions

- If removal of ACM materials is required, a specific procedure will be followed to avoid exposure and contamination during transport activities.
- Wet methods will be required.

See Procedures:

**Removing ACM from Public Roadways (after a flood event)
Removing Obstructions from Under Bridges
Bridge Inspections in the Swift Creek/Sumas River Watershed
Performing Maintenance to Existing Infrastructure**

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