



2600SEG240 ASBESTOS HANDLING STANDARD

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard is to establish hygiene and safety requirements in order to protect employees against exposure to asbestos fibers by inhalation.

2.0 BACKGROUND

This standard supersedes the policy and safety procedures in Chapter 790, Appendix E, of the former Panama Canal Commission Personnel Manual.

3.0 SCOPE

This standard is applicable to all Panama Canal Authority (ACP) employees, contractors and third parties in the facilities, industrial shops, and areas under the responsibility of the Panama Canal Authority.

4.0 LEGAL BASIS

This standard is based on Agreement No. 12 of the Panama Canal Authority Board of Directors and Chapter 1, Articles 8 and 16, of the Safety and Occupational Health Regulations of the Panama Canal Authority.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

5.1 Asbestosis: Lung fibrosis due to exposure to asbestos fibers.

5.2 Mesothelioma: A cancerous tumor of the pleura or peritoneum, caused by exposure to asbestos fibers.

5.3 Lung Cancer: An abnormal growth in lung cells caused mainly by tobacco, genetic changes, or the inhalation of toxic substances.

5.4 HEPA High Efficiency Particulate Filter: A high efficiency filter that collects particulates and fibers.

6.0 GENERAL

6.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

6.1.1 Asbestos products such as ropes, fabric, linings, cement or dust, or products containing asbestos fibers may not be used to replace other products in work areas without the written authorization of the Manager, Safety and Industrial Hygiene Unit (RSHS).

6.1.2 Whenever an appropriate product that does not contain asbestos can be used in lieu of a product that contains asbestos, such substitution must be made. As soon as materials that do not contain asbestos become available to replace asbestos materials or asbestos bearing products currently in use, such asbestos products shall be prohibited and discarded.

6.1.3 Finished products bearing asbestos that have been in use and are being discarded may not be altered. No special precautions are required.



2600SEG240 ASBESTOS HANDLING STANDARD

6.1.4 All areas where the asbestos fiber concentrations exceed permissible limits shall be marked with warning signs. All areas with asbestos insulation or asbestos linings, such as engine rooms and power plants, shall be classified as saturated with or free from asbestos.

6.2 WORK PROCEDURES

6.2.1 When planning work with asbestos or the removal of asbestos products, the Manager, Industrial Hygiene Section, shall be consulted to obtain technical assistance on environmental and employee protection prior to performing such work. It is imperative that a person be designated at each work site as the person responsible for coordinating and monitoring all aspects of the work procedures listed below.

6.2.2 Prior to going to their work site, employees shall change from their street clothes to protective clothing in a clean locker room. Street clothes may not be worn under disposable protective coveralls.

6.2.3 Employees in the proximity of the area where asbestos fibers are handled or asbestos abatement operations are being carried out will need protective measures. Only required personnel may be admitted to the area.

6.2.4 Employees shall obtain and use approved respirators equipped with HEPA type filters. Approved dust, vapor, and gas respirators may not be used. Negative pressure respirators may not be used when the user has a beard, a large moustache, or long sideburns that may prevent a good fit. A periodic fit test shall be required.

6.2.5 To the extent practicable, asbestos or asbestos materials shall be handled wet.

6.2.6 Manual or power tools shall be equipped with an approved local extract ventilation system capable of collecting asbestos fibers.

6.2.7 Whenever enclosing the work area is required, fresh, cool air shall be supplied to workers to prevent heat stress. The ventilation system shall not allow fibers to escape out of the enclosed area.

6.2.8 Whenever the integrity of the asbestos materials is destroyed or shows signs of deterioration, these materials shall be immediately sealed, repaired, or replaced.

6.2.9 Housekeeping of the area shall be made in wet conditions or with approved vacuum cleaners equipped with HEPA high yield filters.

6.2.10 Once their work is completed, employees shall take showers or wash down with a hose while still wearing all their protective clothing. After removing fibers with water, employees shall remove their clothing, wash respirators with water and soap, place the disposable coveralls in plastic bags and label the bags for their proper disposal. Then they shall shower once more and change into their street clothes in a locker room.

6.3 WASTE DISPOSAL

6.3.1 Asbestos contaminated waste shall be placed in double-ply plastic bags 6 mils thick, which shall be properly closed and labeled, to be buried in sanitary landfill pits.

6.3.2 The Sanitation, Control of Vectors and Vegetation Unit (OPEM-S) of the Environmental Division shall be notified so it may coordinate disposal at local sanitary landfills.



2600SEG240 ASBESTOS HANDLING STANDARD

6.4 EXPOSURE MONITORING

6.4.1 RSHS shall take readings of the asbestos fiber concentrations in the environment and monitor personal exposure to asbestos fibers. The Supervisor of RSHS shall inform employees in writing when their exposure exceeds the permissible limits for asbestos, with a copy to the Health, Wellness and Labor Welfare Unit (RHSS).

6.5 MEDICAL EVALUATION

6.5.1 Workers exposed to asbestos fiber concentrations exceeding the permissible exposure limits shall be evaluated by RHSS while employed by the Panama Canal Authority.

6.6 TRAINING

6.6.1 Employees exposed to asbestos shall be instructed regarding the hazards of this material, respiratory protection, personal hygiene, and the need to undergo medical evaluation. This training shall be conducted by Industrial Hygienists and other competent health staff. Supervisors may request this training by contacting the Supervisor of RSHS.

6.7 RECORDKEEPING AND ACCESS TO DATA

6.7.1 Test and analysis records shall be kept by the Health, Wellness and Labor Welfare Unit (RHSS).

6.7.2 Units shall keep a record of the training provided to their employees.

6.7.3 RSHS shall keep monitoring level records.

6.7.4 These records shall be kept available to employees according to ACP regulations.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities for ensuring compliance with this Standard are described in the Occupational Health and Safety Management Standard 2600SEG101.

8.0 INQUIRIES

Any information or clarification of the content or application of this standard may be requested in writing to RSHS.

9.0 EXCEPTIONS

Any deviations or temporary exceptions to compliance with this standard may be requested in writing to RSHS.

10.0 TERM

This standard shall remain in force until revised or amended.

11.0 REFERENCES

11.1 Record Retention Tables, Records Management Section, ACP.



2600SEG240
ASBESTOS HANDLING STANDARD

11.2 RESPIRATORY PROTECTION STANDARD 2600SEG205

11.3 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INFORMATION STANDARD 2600SEG201