

Surprising Scope of Asbestos Regulation

Most know that asbestos is bad stuff. However, building owners are often surprised to learn that federal and state asbestos requirements can capture routine activities such as minor renovation and even cleaning.

Asbestos was a popular building material for years. While mostly associated with older buildings, its use was never completely banned, so asbestos can be present even in newer construction. In fact, except under limited circumstances, one must assume asbestos is present, and take appropriate action, before conducting demolition or renovation work.

Owners of commercial properties, even small ones, that contain asbestos are required to protect employees, tenants, and contractors from exposure through training, notice, and work practices. Willful ignorance of asbestos requirements is not an effective compliance strategy. One call from a concerned neighbor, angry former employee, or unsuccessful contract bidder can trigger civil, or even criminal, enforcement.

Asbestos risks can be managed. Understanding how to do so will allow current and prospective building owners to protect their investments.



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