
TECHNICAL GUIDANCE SERIES					
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The Technical Guidance Series aims to provide clarity on industry concerns, queries and any issues raised with the core focus on education and improvements.

Asbestos Register

An asbestos register is a fundamental aspect of successfully managing asbestos within any non-domestic premise.

The size and complexity of the register will be wholly dependent upon the organisation. For example, for a corner shop the register may be a hand noted plan showing the location and extent of all ACMs present, whereas a nationwide retailer would need something far more sophisticated than this.

Irrespective of the organisations size the register must still provide the same basic functions. These are;

- Provide the location of all known or presumed ACMs
- Record the extent and condition of all recorded ACMs

The register must be accessible to all those who would need it. This requires good knowledge within the organisation as to where the register is located and how access is gained. For larger organisations this might be an electronic version and require a username and password as well as the URL.

It is important to recognise that an asbestos register is not just the results of a management survey. It should be an amalgamation of all the materials that have been identified on any survey that has been conducted on the premises. This will include historical management surveys, possibly Type 2 surveys undertaken under MDHS 100, and potentially refurbishment surveys.

Refurbishment surveys will expose additional areas of a building not normally accessed during a management survey. Even if the materials are subsequently removed, they should still be added to the register as this may help to inform future schemes within the building or similarly constructed premises within the same organisation.

When a refurbishment or even demolition survey is undertaken the general principle is that any ACMs identified will be removed. This may not always be the case if the proposed works are postponed, changed or even abandoned all together. In such circumstances the knowledge gained on the presence of asbestos within the building could be lost if it isn't added to the register.

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Photographs of each ACM identified are extremely important to be included as this will greatly assist in the identification of the material by those who refer to the register. These are also essential in the on-going management of the materials as it provides a record of the condition of the material at the time of the inspection.

On a periodic basis every ACM in the register needs to be re-inspected by a competent person. These inspections must be used to update the register so that the most current information is contained and therefore the document remains 'live'.

It is unlikely that the same person will undertake the re-inspection as who undertook the previous inspection. To retain some consistency the previous photograph should be used to assess whether the condition of the material has deteriorated since the last inspection.

Whilst the main purpose of an asbestos register is to hold information on ACMs, those involved in managing asbestos would benefit from additional information being contained. If materials that don't contain asbestos but look similar to those that do were also contained within the register it might reduce the need to recall asbestos surveyors to site to reassess the material.

Each individual application of a material should be recorded. Where multiple applications exist within the same space it would not be uncommon for the survey report to include a single photograph and a note stating the number of occurrences. If this was directly transferred into the register it could make subsequent re-inspections problematic if the condition of one application changes.

An asbestos register must remain live and accurate reflecting the materials present throughout the premises it covers. Maintaining the relevance of the register will include recording any remedial work undertaken on an ACM; for example, the removal of any products as well as any repairs or treatments.

Consideration also needs to be given to those who may need to use the register and therefore its ease of use and functionality are important. A manager may wish to review information such as the number of ACMs and the risk scores. However, a trades person is more likely to rely heavily on the drawings and as such they need to be accurate and a true reflection of location and extent of ACMs along with any restrictions such as areas not accessed or presumptions.

The greater the quality of the information contained the more assistance it will provide in the management of asbestos.