

Asbestos in Machinery Matters

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The reason for bringing this particular topic to Members today is to underline the fact that asbestos contained within machinery can so easily be overlooked. Although the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (CAWR) 2012, covers buildings **AND** machinery, machinery is not included within the usual building Survey, and there is frequently sparse information available. Tim began by explaining that the 'cut off' point in terms of asbestos used is 1999. The last batch imported was in 1994, when 40,000 tons of asbestos came into the UK. The focus today will be on machines brought prior to 1999.

CAWR 2012

The Regs make specific reference to asbestos in machinery, however it is regarded as a 'specialist area' and therefore is often ignored/overlooked. Tim said that he had experienced this 'neglect' in an Asbestos Surveyors Course that he had recently attended.

Tim reminded us of some key facts about asbestos:

- In the general environment, asbestos fibre levels should be less than the control limit i.e. 0.1 asbestos fibres per cubic centimetre of air (0.1 f/cm³).
- Most of us who are over 50 years of age will have been exposed to asbestos levels that are not acceptable today.
- Finding asbestos is a specialist job and the fibres cannot be seen/defined by using the naked eye.
- The environment becomes safe (after asbestos removal) only if clearance monitoring has been carried out and confirmed that asbestos fibre levels are not elevated.
- By April 2015, all workers and self-employed persons carrying out non-notifiable work will have to be signed up to a programme of health surveillance.
- If a machine is made and CE marked post 1999, it is very unlikely that asbestos is present.

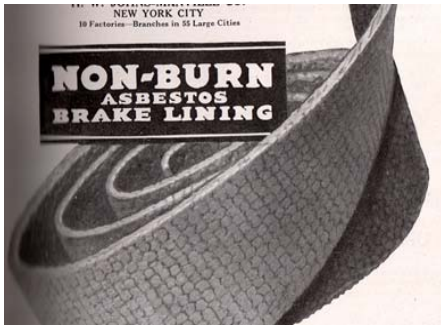
CAWR says that maintenance work on plant or equipment that might contain asbestos, needs to be risk assessed. In other words, the location of asbestos needs to be identified, the type and condition, and the risks assessed managed and controlled.

Where Can Asbestos Be Found in Machinery?

- Clutch & Brakes: ACM in friction material.
- Control Box: ACM in millboard as thermal material.
- Isolator: ACM in millboard as thermal material.
- Cabling: ACM in felt and cardboard used as insulation in electrical equipment.
- Plaited tubing: in some electrical cabling.
- Drive belts: ACM woven in composition belts.

- Air system: ACM acoustic linings in baffles, silencers, and pipe insulation.
- Filters: ACM in Oil or Air Filters.
- Electrical Wiring: Braided or plaited cable.

Your contractor should be asking to see the asbestos assessment before any work starts.



Brake and Clutch lining ACM



Electrical Equipment Arc Shields, ACM in fuses and electrical contacts

What Next?

1. Compile a register of machines being used (there are simple documents that can be downloaded to help with this).
2. Talk to your maintenance engineer and check the records for clutches that have been changed.
3. Label the machine.
4. Log the location of each machine and the number of that machine.
5. Complete a permit to work for all who carry out work on the machine.

Helpfully, Tim reminded us that the HSE has a website that gives very comprehensive and useful information. Don't forget the Asbestos Guides and the 'Essentials' Guidance Sheets.

George Allcock added that asbestos can also often be found in the gasket to heat treatment services and that asbestos insulation was used on metal moulding tools. **Mark Hoare** mentioned that the University of Birmingham had found asbestos in a braille making machine. **David Hughes** added that he had come across a block of asbestos under a furnace in a foundry!

Dally thanked Tim for his presentation. We have been reminded of a few key issues concerning asbestos and we know not to overlook machinery and equipment in our own organisations.