

**Asbestos**

**OAR 437**  
**Division 2/Z**  
**Division 3/Z**  
**Division 4/Z**  
**Division 5**

**Asbestos**

**Asbestos** is the name given to a group of naturally occurring minerals used in certain products, such as building materials and vehicle brakes, to resist heat and corrosion. Asbestos includes chrysotile, amosite, crocidolite, tremolite asbestos, anthophyllite asbestos, actinolite asbestos, and any of these materials that have been chemically treated and/or altered.

The inhalation of asbestos fibers by workers can cause serious diseases of the lungs and other organs that may not appear until years after the exposure has occurred. For instance, asbestosis can cause a buildup of scar-like tissue in the lungs and result in loss of lung function that often progresses to disability and death. Asbestos fibers associated with these health risks are too small to be seen with the naked eye, and smokers are at higher risk of developing some asbestos-related diseases.

Employees may be exposed to asbestos during the manufacture of asbestos-containing products, when performing brake and clutch repairs, when disturbing asbestos-containing materials during the renovation or demolition of buildings, and when renovating or demolishing ships constructed with asbestos-containing materials. Custodial workers may be exposed through contact with deteriorating asbestos-containing materials in buildings.

**There are four standards that address employee exposures to asbestos:**

**OAR 437-003-1926.1101** covers construction work, including alteration, repair, renovation, and demolition of structures containing asbestos.

**OAR 437-005-1915.1001** covers asbestos exposure during work in shipyards.

**OAR 437-002-1910.1001** applies to asbestos exposure in general industry, such as exposure during brake and clutch repair, custodial work, and manufacture of asbestos-containing products.

**OAR 437-004-9050** addresses asbestos exposures in agricultural settings.

OR-OSHA rules presume that building products installed before 1981 contain asbestos. Such products are defined as presumed asbestos-containing materials (PACM). Treat these materials as though they contain asbestos unless they have been sampled and shown not to contain asbestos. In most cases, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) rules require that any survey and collection of bulk samples for asbestos be done by an accredited inspector.

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**Asbestos work under 1926.1101 and 1915.1001 falls within four classes:**

**Class I** asbestos work, the most hazardous class of asbestos jobs, involves the removal of asbestos-containing or presumed asbestos-containing thermal insulation and sprayed-on or troweled-on surfacing material.

Thermal insulation includes asbestos-containing materials applied to pipes, boilers, tanks, ducts, or other structural components to prevent heat loss or gain. Surfacing materials may include decorative plaster on ceilings, acoustical materials on decking, or fireproofing on structural members.

**Class II** work includes the removal of other types of asbestos-containing materials that are not thermal insulation, such as flooring and roofing materials. Examples of Class II work include removal of floor or ceiling tiles, siding, roofing, or transite panels. There is specific language for work with roofing and flooring, and that is discussed in Program Directive A-213. More information about this can be found by following the link for Oregon OSHA's asbestos information page below. Removing intact incidental roofing materials, such as cements, mastics, coatings, and flashings, is not regulated as Class II.

**Class III** asbestos work includes repair and maintenance operations where asbestos-containing or presumed asbestos-containing materials are disturbed. The primary purpose of the work is not to remove or disturb asbestos, although some removal or disturbance may occur. Examples of Class III work include repairing broken pipes that have asbestos wrapping, installing floor anchors in an area with asbestos floor tile, or installing electrical conduit through walls with asbestos insulation.

**Class IV** operations include maintenance and custodial activities in which employees contact but do not disturb asbestos-containing materials. These activities must be related to the construction project, usually resulting from Class I, II, or III activities.



Custodial work that is not related to a construction project or to Class I, II, or III work is covered by the general industry asbestos rule, OAR 437-002-1910.1001. Employees who perform work such as brake and clutch repair also fall within this rule.

Training is required for all employees who work with asbestos, and the type of training depends on the work being performed. In some cases of asbestos removal, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) requires additional training, licensing, and notification.



**Common Questions**

**Q** **Isn't asbestos banned?**  
**A** No. Only insulation and similar products are banned from use. You can still purchase many products that contain asbestos, including automotive brake pads and clutches, although they usually need to be labelled as such. Labels may also list only forms of asbestos, such as chrysotile, instead of specifically stating "asbestos."

**Q** **When building products have multiple layers, does each distinct layer need to be analyzed separately, or can we sample the whole as a composite?**  
**A** No. OSHA rules do not allow composite sampling.

**Q** **We need to remove building products that contain less than 1 percent of asbestos. Do the rules for asbestos removal still apply?**  
**A** Yes. While it is not asbestos-containing material (ACM) as defined by the rule, if there is still asbestos present, you still need to follow the work practices, clean-up, and disposal requirements of the rule.

**Q** **We are working on a removal job that is classified as "nonfriable" by DEQ, and many of their requirements don't apply. Do Oregon OSHA's rules still apply?**  
**A** Yes. Any removal of asbestos-containing building products is still fully regulated as one of the four classes of work.

**References:**

- Oregon OSHA's asbestos information page: [www.cbs.state.or.us/external/osa/subjects/asbestos.html](http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/osa/subjects/asbestos.html)
- Federal OSHA's asbestos information page: [www.osha.gov/SLTC/asbestos/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/asbestos/index.html)
- The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's asbestos information page: [www.deq.state.or.us/aq/asbestos/index.htm](http://www.deq.state.or.us/aq/asbestos/index.htm)