



# BMPs

## Best Management Practices for N.H. Solid Waste Facilities

### Asbestos

Asbestos is a term for a group of naturally occurring fibrous minerals known for their high tensile strength and thermal insulating properties. A wide variety of products contain asbestos, including heating system insulation, vinyl floor tiles and sheet flooring, roofing paper and shingles, cement siding shingles, and a variety of other building construction products. When disturbed, asbestos can break down into microscopic fibers that may become airborne. These fibers can be inhaled and trapped in the lungs, causing deadly respiratory diseases including asbestosis and lung cancer, as well as mesothelioma, a cancer of the chest cavity lining.

Asbestos-containing materials or “ACM” is categorized as either:

- **Non-friable**, meaning it can NOT be crushed under hand pressure, such as the house shingles shown in Figure 1; or
- **Friable**, meaning it can be crushed under hand pressure, such as the pipe and boiler insulation shown in Figures 2 and 3, respectively. Friable asbestos has a greater risk of being inhaled than non-friable.

#### Did You Know?

- Asbestos is classified as a hazardous air pollutant, but can be disposed of as a solid waste in a landfill with a permit to accept it.
- Asbestos is still used in modern building products, such as roof coatings and felt, cement shingles and pipe, millboard, floor tiles and some automotive products.

State and federal regulations require workers who remove ACM from structures to be properly trained, equipped and certified to do their work. However, homeowners are allowed to remove ACM themselves. Although it is unlawful to put ACM in with the regular trash, it happens. Therefore, solid waste facility operators should learn to recognize ACM in the trash and know what steps to take to protect themselves and others from being exposed.

ACM can only be disposed of at authorized landfills. It must be delivered separately in sealed containers or heavy duty bags that are labeled “DANGER—CONTAINS ASBESTOS FIBERS—AVOID CREATING DUST—CANCER & LUNG HAZARD”. Shipping papers are required. If your facility accepts asbestos waste as part of its normal operations, special permit provisions apply. Contact NHDES for more information.

#### Best Management Practices for Asbestos

- Obtain necessary permits and training prior to your facility accepting asbestos waste.
- Even if your facility does not accept ACM, be prepared to handle it correctly in case it is found in the regular trash. In your facility’s Operating Plan, clearly state what workers must do to manage asbestos waste if it is discovered. Contact a licensed asbestos abatement contractor or NHDES for technical assistance.
- Learn to recognize the variety of products and materials that may contain asbestos.
- With proper training and equipment, follow these basic steps if ACM is discovered at your facility:
  - > Secure the area to keep unauthorized people away.
  - > Prevent fibers from becoming airborne by wetting it with a fine mist of water.
  - > If the material is not properly contained and labeled, contact a licensed asbestos abatement contractor for assistance in cleaning it up.

- > Store the properly contained and labeled material in a restricted area.
- > Make arrangements to ship the waste to an authorized landfill.
- Ship properly contained and labeled ACM, with shipping papers, to authorized landfills with at least 24 hours prior notice.
- Keep records, including shipping papers, disposal receipts, incident reports and worker training.
- Contact your physician if you think you have been exposed to asbestos.



Figure 1: Non-friable asbestos shingles



Figure 2: Friable pipe insulation



Figure 3: Friable asbestos insulation on an old furnace

**For additional information, contact:**  
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