

# Management of Asbestos in all Council Properties

## OHS-C-15.P1

### Policy

#### 1.1 Introduction

This Policy, in conjunction with the Council's general Occupational Health & Safety Policy, describes the Council's aims and objectives to secure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and others who may be affected by the activities of Fife Council.

Fife Council recognises its general duty to do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent exposure of employees and others (including visitors, pupils, residents, tenants, contractors and other users of Council properties) to airborne asbestos fibres.

#### 1.2 Risks Arising

The risks arising from exposure to airborne asbestos contamination are recognised. It is accepted that the presence of asbestos in Council properties and workplaces does not in itself constitute an immediate risk provided:

- Its location is known
- it is in good condition,
- it is sealed, or in such a location that it is unlikely to be damaged or worked on, and
- Its condition is effectively managed.

There is a risk to health only if the materials are damaged or disturbed. It is recognised that those directly and indirectly engaged in maintenance or other construction work are particularly vulnerable – this includes persons entering or working on buildings after damage by fire.

#### 2.0 Policy

It is the Policy of Fife Council that:

- 2.1** Risks arising from Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) are effectively managed. This shall include:

- **Assessing the risk** of exposure from ACMs, or any material presumed to be an ACM.

- Determine the frequency for monitoring, and effectively **monitor the condition** of all ACMs / presumed ACMs.
  - The **preparation and implementation of a management plan** to control risks arising.
- 2.2** Adequate assessment of all Fife Council properties is undertaken to establish the locations, types and condition of any asbestos present, in order to inform the **Asbestos Risk Register** for each property.
- 2.3** Where we lease-out premises and where we lease properties from other owners, there will in each circumstance be adequate liaison and agreement to determine the extent of responsibility of both parties to ensure compliance with the duty to manage asbestos.  
(Similar discussion and agreement will take place where Fife Council occupies, or otherwise has interest in, premises in multiple occupation).
- 2.4** Adequate records of assessments and routine condition surveys are maintained, along with records of results and analysis of any samples and any remedial actions taken.
- 2.5** Where asbestos exists in Council property under our control, and the asbestos is in sound condition, sealed and unlikely to be damaged or disturbed, to leave that asbestos material in place, and maintain it in a safe condition.
- 2.6** Any up-dates or alterations to the Asbestos Risk Register where asbestos materials are removed or altered due to maintenance or renovation works are promptly communicated to those in day-to-day control of the premises.
- 2.7** So far as is reasonably practicable, action is taken to identify the nature of any potential asbestos containing material before allowing any employee or any other person to commence work that may break or disturb that material.
- 2.8** Asbestos Risk Registers will be made available in all occupied Council premises (other than Council Housing Stock) and will be brought to the attention of employees, appointed safety representatives and representatives of employee safety at premises where they work or represent the health & safety interests of employees.
- 2.9** Information about known asbestos in our Housing Stock (both residential and common areas) is made available to Council Housing tenants, and to the prospective purchaser (or their agent) of any Council house.
- 2.10** General information regarding the risks arising due to asbestos and sensible precautions to be taken is provided to existing and new tenants of Council houses.
- 2.11** The existing Asbestos Risk Register for any Council Property is made freely available to the purchaser (or their agent) of any Council property.

- 2.12** Suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training, along with adequate levels of supervision, are provided to those employees likely to encounter or disturb asbestos containing materials in their day-to-day work. Adequate records of training of Fife Council employees will be maintained.
- 2.13** Fife Council takes all reasonable steps to ensure the relevant competencies of all contractors and consultants we engage to conduct works involving actual or potential risk of disturbing asbestos containing materials.
- 2.14** All systems of work, methods and developed procedures for the control of asbestos and related works are adequately and effectively managed, organised, implemented, controlled, monitored and reviewed.
- 2.15** All ACM debris arising from removal work or accidental or malicious damaged is disposed of only in accordance with relevant Environment and Special Waste Legislation. Fife Council shall take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that contractors working on our behalf also comply.
- 2.16** Fife Council recognises that the levels of occupancy and range of activities in many of our buildings and rooms can be dynamic. Local systems will be applied for reporting and initialising appropriate changes to Asbestos Register risk ratings and any associated remedial actions. Our compliance audit processes will confirm this process.  
Where appropriate, Asbestos Risk Register Information will be amended to reflect changes.

**2.17** Identification and Labelling of ACMs is permitted as follows:

ACMs in Fife Council premises will not usually be identified by labelling, colour coding, or any other form of unique marking. We recognise that the widespread adoption of such identification systems can quickly fall into disrepute, with labels being over-painted, or being deliberately removed. Such identification can itself lead to deliberate and malicious damage of the ACM, particularly in public or other unsupervised areas of our buildings.

Labelling of ACMs will be accepted in these circumstances:

- in plant rooms (where access is restricted to authorised personnel)
- in communal (non-domestic) areas of our Housing stock where the public do not have access, where maintenance activities may take place (e.g. loft & basement areas)
- in domestic and other areas of our Housing Stock as a ready means of identifying to tenants those areas of their homes (such as linings in warm-air heater cupboards) where they should take care not to cause damage to ACMs.
- At commercially let properties

### **3.0 Scope of Asbestos Work undertaken by Fife Council employees**

**3.1** Suitably trained and authorised employees of (Asset and Facilities Management Service) Building Services may undertake work on asbestos containing materials-only where the exposure of employees to asbestos is sporadic and of low intensity; and

(a) It is clear from a risk assessment that the exposure of any employee to asbestos will not exceed the control limit<sup>1</sup>; and

(b) The work involves—

- short, non-continuous maintenance activities.
- removal of materials in which the asbestos fibres are firmly linked in a matrix, e.g. cement, coatings, bitumen, plastic and resin products.
- encapsulation or sealing of asbestos-containing materials which are in good condition.

### **4.0 Work on Asbestos Containing Materials by contractors**

**4.1** Where works are contracted to external agencies which involve the same limited scope of works discussed above, Fife Council shall ensure that adequate information is made available to those contractors regarding the presence and type of known or presumed ACMs which may be encountered during the work.

**4.2** More extensive work on Asbestos Containing Materials (outwith the scope of item 3 above) shall be undertaken only by competent licensed contractors.

**4.3** Effective systems for the selection (ensuring adequate competency to undertake work on or near ACMs), monitoring and evaluation of all contractors shall be applied by commissioning Services.

### **5.0 Responsibilities**

**5.1** The Head of Asset and Facilities Management, the Managers of both Property Services and Building Services and the Head of Housing have particular responsibility to ensure that appropriate and safe systems of work are developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed for all properties and works under their control.

**5.2** All Heads of Service have particular responsibility to ensure that this Policy is brought to the attention of all employees and is complied with fully at all times.

**5.3** Persons in Control <sup>2</sup> and those in day-to-day control of Council Workplaces & other premises (e.g. Head Teachers, Heads of Centre,) shall ensure that Asbestos Risk Registers are readily available at all times to those employees of the Council, external contractors and others who may need to refer to them.

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Note 1 "The control limit" means a concentration of asbestos in the atmosphere, measured in accordance with approved methods, of 0.1 fibres per cubic centimetre of air averaged over a continuous period of 4 hours.

**5.4** Fife Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team shall be the source of competent advice in matters of implementation of this Policy.

## **6.0 Monitoring and Review**

**6.1** This Policy shall be reviewed annually and its continued effectiveness and implementation monitored by Fife Council's Corporate Health & Safety Team, in conjunction with the Council's Asbestos Working Group.

**6.2** Where amendments are proposed, these will be presented to the Fife Council Corporate Health & Safety Strategy Group for approval.

Note 2: Persons in Control: this term is defined in the Council's Health and Safety Management Framework.

Change record:

*(This Policy was first issued following agreement at the meeting of Fife Council Corporate Health & Safety Strategy Group (CHSSG) on 3<sup>rd</sup> October and at Fife Council JNCF meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> September 2005). It was reissued in October 2008) at revision 2.0 with two additional policy statements (2.16 & 2.17) and a series of minor and consequential amendments. December 2009 the following minor amendments were approved at the CHSSG Paragraph 3.1 "Scope of Asbestos Work undertaken by Fife Council employees" revised to provide clarity and align with context of Control of Asbestos Regulations (2006) and the proposed scope of non-licensed asbestos works to be undertaken by Building Services personnel. New footnote also added on page 4. Paragraph 3.2 (application of 3.1 to other groups within Fife Council) deleted – not applicable and Paragraph 4.2 minor clarification (improved wording).*

Revision 2.3 (April 2015): minor change at 2.7; 5.3;5.4 and 6.1. At 2.17, Commercial Let premises added to accepted list.Approved by Corporate Health and Safety Strategy Group 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015.