Southampton City Council

Guidance - Asbestos Survey Types

Corporate Health and Safety Service | Version 1.00 | August 2023

STATEMENT:

This document aims to provide guidance on the two asbestos survey types, management surveys and refurbishment and demolition surveys (R&D). Readers may also refer to SCC H&S Policies, information contained within the H&S micro-site (asbestos) and HSE ACoP/Guidance documents L143 and HSG264.

This document is for guidance purposes only, the examples provided within aim to illustrate where the two survey types may be applicable, but will not cover every circumstance or construction element.

Every employer must make sure that anyone who is liable to disturb asbestos during their normal work, or who supervises those employees, gets the correct level of information, instruction and training so that they can work safely and competently without risk to themselves or others (source – HSE).

Version Control		
Version No.	**Issue Date**	**Notes**
Version 1.00	Aug 2023	New guidance document

Content:

1. Management Survey
2. Refurbishment and Demolition Surveys (R&D)
3. Service Requests Process

1. Management Surveys

A management survey is the standard survey. Its purpose is to locate, as far as reasonably practicable, the presence and extent of any suspect asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in the building which could be damaged or disturbed during normal occupancy, including foreseeable maintenance and installation, and to assess their condition.

Management surveys will often involve minor intrusive work and some disturbance. The extent of intrusion will vary between premises and depend on what is reasonably practicable for individual properties, i.e. it will depend on factors such as the type of building, the nature of construction, accessibility etc. A management survey should include an assessment of the condition of the various ACMs and their ability to release fibres into the air if they are disturbed in some way.

The survey will usually involve sampling and analysis to confirm the presence or absence of ACMs. However, a management survey can also involve presuming the presence or absence of asbestos. A management survey can be completed using a combination of sampling ACMs and presuming ACMs or, indeed, just presuming.

Management surveys should cover routine and simple maintenance work. However, it has to be recognised that where 'more extensive' maintenance or repair work is involved, there may not be sufficient information in the management survey and a targeted refurbishment survey will be needed. **A refurbishment survey will be required for all work which disturbs the fabric of the building in areas where the management survey has not been intrusive.**

All ACMs should be identified as far as is reasonably practicable. The areas inspected should include: underfloor coverings, above false ceilings (ceiling voids), lofts, inside risers, service ducts and lift shafts, basements, cellars, underground rooms, undercrofts (this list is not exhaustive). **Note: SCC asbestos surveyors shall not routinely undertake destructive survey methods in occupied premises unless this is specifically requested.**

2. Refurbishment and Demolition Surveys (R&D)

A refurbishment and demolition survey is needed before any refurbishment or demolition work is carried out. This type of survey is used to locate and describe, as far as reasonably practicable, all ACMs in the area where the refurbishment work will take place or in the whole building if demolition is planned. The survey will be fully intrusive and involve destructive inspection, as necessary, to gain access to all areas, including those that may be difficult to reach. A refurbishment and demolition survey may also be required in other circumstances, e.g., when more intrusive maintenance and repair work will be carried out or for plant removal or dismantling.

Refurbishment and demolition surveys are intended to locate all the asbestos in the building (or the relevant part), as far as reasonably practicable. It is a disruptive and fully intrusive survey which may need to penetrate all parts of the building structure. Aggressive inspection techniques will be needed to lift carpets and tiles, break through walls, ceilings, cladding and partitions, and open up floors.

R&D Survey Example Situations

It should be assumed that management surveys will **not** have accessed structural locations, e.g., behind or beneath concrete or between floors and walls such as cavity walls, partition walls, within service risers, etc. Remember, the materials sampled or presumed on a management survey may only

relate to those accessible to the surveyor, i.e., those that may be on the surface and readily accessible for sample purposes; there may be materials encased or encapsulated beneath.

This guidance is aimed at providing additional practical help to enable frontline staff an understanding of where an R&D survey may be required prior to commencing work. It provides examples of specific areas which should be inspected in a refurbishment or demolition survey (**but note that the list is not exhaustive**).

Partition Walls

Partition walls may consist of timber or metal studwork clad with plasterboard, non-asbestos sheets such as master-board, Supalux (or similar) or various timber-based sheet materials. If there is a need to disturb any materials noted on a management survey, for example partial deconstruction, deconstruction/demolition, penetration of the facing materials, cutting apertures (examples include electrical boxes, doors, windows, etc), etc. then there is potential for unknown materials to be present within the construction. The partition may have been over-clad previously and asbestos insulation board was used widely as a facing/cladding material in the past (pre-1999).

The space/void within a partition wall may also contain historic asbestos debris or insulation materials which wouldn't have been picked up through a management survey.

Floors

Traditional timber floor joists and boards contain the potential for asbestos debris, insulation materials, asbestos rope and asbestos containing packing (particularly at joist ends). Care should be taken when lifting or removing floorboards for repair/replacement and users should be observant and prepare to stop and report any suspected materials uncovered. Larger works where significant board replacement is required or where joist replacement is necessary will require a targeted R&D survey.

Works which would involve the forming of apertures through floor constructions, the installation of mobility lifts, ventilation ducts and similar should also necessitate an R&D survey.

It is important that survey requests include sufficient detail of what sections of floor need to be accessed for survey purposes as it may not always be feasible in occupied premises due to destruction of laminate floors, fitted carpets etc. A combination of watching briefs, awareness training of operatives, and use of existing survey information may be more appropriate, but advice may be sought from CE&A Asbestos Team.

Concrete floors are known to contain asbestos packing, shuttering and loose debris. This is particularly prevalent in tower blocks and similar where service risers exist. ACM may be concealed within the concrete or screed and advice should be sought prior to works commencing.

Cavity Walls

Cavity closers (usually Asbestos Cement) are sometimes found around air bricks, windows, doors, etc. All apertures should be considered likely locations for ACM to be present.

Although loose asbestos is not known to be present as a cavity insulation material within SCC properties, users should be mindful for the presence of unknown insulation materials.

Core Drilling - If walls are of traditional build, R&D surveys shouldn't be needed but if walls are constructed from panels/stud partitioning/unknown materials then R&D will be necessary prior to commencing works.

Damp proof courses may also contain asbestos so any work likely to disturb (DPC) must confirm the material type prior to commencement of work (see task sheet S22).

Fascia, Soffits and Cladding

Soffits and facias may be covering a pre-existing asbestos containing material (ACM) which may not have been possible to report on a management survey. Replacement works on SCC properties where a targeted R&D survey wasn't undertaken prior to commencement of works, have caused incidents of disturbance to underlying (hidden) materials. Soffits may also hold unseen ACM debris and dust which may be disturbed by any removal processes. A targeted R&D survey is recommended for any removal and replacement works.

Cladding is relatively widespread and often provides a low maintenance solution against the original cladding material. Like fascia and soffits, cladding may be concealing materials which may include ACM.

Cladding may also be concealing columns etc. which contain (or encapsulate) an original asbestos-based fire protection, AIB or sprayed coatings.

A targeted R&D survey is required for any invasive works including removal and replacement.

Service Risers, Ducts

Unless the asbestos survey clearly indicates that the riser/duct materials and internal space are free from ACM, then an R&D survey must be requested prior to commencement of works. Service risers have a higher probability of ACM being present or was present historically. There is potential for ACM to have been used as packing around services, as insulation materials or as a construction material in any panels or cladding enclosing the riser space. Service risers and ducts may also contain debris from ACM which may not be visible.

It has also been known for occupiers to have over-clad the original materials or partially removed and replaced, for example a section replaced with a non-asbestos material, but the rest remains as ACM.

Door/Window Apertures

Cavity closers (usually Asbestos Cement) are sometimes found around air bricks, windows, doors, etc. All apertures should be considered likely locations for ACM to be present.

Although loose asbestos is not known to be present as a cavity insulation material within SCC properties, users should be mindful for the presence of unknown insulation materials.

Historically door and window frames commonly had AIB packers between frame and wall. Fire doors in particular may contain AIB packers and asbestos rope for the assistance of forming a fire break as part of the original installation.

Removal and replacement of door/window frames should be undertaken following a targeted R&D survey or advice sought from CE&A Asbestos Team.

Lofts Space/Roof Voids

Loft spaces and roof voids are typically found to contain various insulation materials. Materials may include Rockwool, vermiculite and/or more modern insulation products. It is rare, but there is potential for loose asbestos fill to have been used particularly in areas where dockyards are or were located in the area.

Spaces may also include AIB fire breaks, fire curtains etc. or were present previously.

ACS water tanks may remain in-situ and of an unconfirmed condition.

There may be debris present or concealed within or beneath insulation materials which may include:

- Broken up ACS from soffits, facias or water tanks,
- AIB debris from fire breaks, curtains, or used as insulation materials,
- ACM pipe insulation or asbestos rope products,

Any task which includes a need to disturb materials present in a roof space or void should necessitate a targeted R&D survey or advice sought from CE&A Asbestos Team in advance.

Suspended Ceilings

Suspended ceilings come in several forms. Older examples include AIB ceiling panels screwed directly to timber battens. Any works associated with this type of material and construction is licensed.

Suspended ceilings often conceal cluttered spaces which may include ventilation ducts, gas and water pipes, electrical and telecommunications cables, etc.

A suspended ceiling void may contain asbestos debris (particularly on top of tiles, ducts, etc.), other ACM such as pipe lagging, insulation, sprayed coatings, gaskets, fire breaks or curtains, etc.

Any task which includes a need to remove/replace tiles or to access the suspended ceiling space or void should necessitate a targeted R&D survey or advice sought from CE&A Asbestos Team. Example works may include removal of tiles to enable rewiring, replacement light fittings, access to pipe, ducts, cables, services, etc.

3. Service Requests Process

Asbestos Survey Process (all types)

The client, i.e., the person initiating or commissioning the works is responsible for logging an initial service request on the corporate asbestos database.

The client may request a site meeting with Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos) in order to establish what work is proposed, methods of proposed works, routes of cables, pipes, etc. which may penetrate ACM and/or any part of the project which has the reasonably foreseeable potential to disturb ACM or materials which are unconfirmed as being free of asbestos.

Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos) will provide professional advice to the client based on what is known and provided by the client and/or contractor.
Following any site meeting, the client is responsible for providing confirmation in writing of the meeting outputs including detailed description of works likely to disturb ACM or materials which are unconfirmed as being free of asbestos, method statements, site plans, drawings and scope or works for survey.

Upon receipt of the service request and updated information as above, Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos) will confirm to the client in writing what deliverables will be achieved, including any caveats, limitations or proposed alternate arrangements to include watching briefs, which parts of the survey process may be delivered during the project (phased surveys) and where practicable a timeframe.

Service requests and supporting information will be held on the corporate asbestos database.

Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos) shall undertake the required level of survey and where necessary feedback to the client in writing any materials which the survey process has disturbed and needs to be made-good.

Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos) will undertake the required level of survey and where necessary feedback to the client any areas of the survey which were not completed, detailing what action or further information may be required or proposed actions by Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos), e.g. watching briefs, phased surveys, etc.

Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos) shall validate surveys undertaken and thereafter update the corporate asbestos database. Automated and/or specific emails will be generated in order to advise the client (and where requested the contractor) of the status of the service request.

The project may proceed once the client and contractor (client consultation) are satisfied that the process has provided sufficient information pertaining to asbestos risk identified or reasonably foreseeable risk relating to the project.

Where change and/or a variation occurs within the project, asbestos risk must be reassessed. A service request must be submitted where this occurs.

Managing Refurbishment and Demolition (R&D) Projects

The Corporate Asbestos Database does not contain sufficiently comprehensive information to ensure the safe management of asbestos risks during refurbishment or demolitions works. Persons initiating

refurbishment work must determine whether activities are likely to disturb known, assumed or concealed (previously unreported) ACMs.

If the project is deemed likely to disturb ACMs, works must not start until a suitable and sufficient (targeted) R&D survey and assessment has been made and reported in writing. Advice can be sought from Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos) regarding this requirement.

To ensure such an R&D survey and assessment is adequately scoped, the surveyor/assessor must be supplied with full project details, proposed methods of work, and be invited to attend a site meeting to ensure clarity.

Note: Those requesting surveys must provide sufficient detail of the works being proposed so that the survey includes relevant areas and ACM's, so consider cable and pipe routes, links to other works, kitchen/bathroom replacements. A targeted R&D survey should limit the survey scope to the relevancy of works being proposed.

Typically, Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos) will carry out any R&D survey and assessment required to facilitate such works. For larger strategic projects or demolition works it may prove practical for this activity to be included in the contracts scope and undertaken by an external party; however, authorisation in writing must first be sought from Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos).

Any application to the Health and Safety Executive to waiver the 14-day notification must only be made with the written approval of the Health, Safety & Employee Wellbeing Manager.

Where any project involves the encapsulation, removal or repair of an ACM complete the Asbestos Actions Returns Form, and return it to Corporate Estate & Assets (asbestos) (this includes "minor works" undertaken by normal trades and any tasks requiring a licensed asbestos removal contractor).