

## **Section 15: ASBESTOS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Asbestos has been used in many building, friction, and other types of products for decades. Its use was banned in most building products by 1980, but is not banned for other uses, such as brakes, clutches or gaskets. Exposure to airborne asbestos can cause lung disease, lung cancer and mesothelioma. A partial list of materials that may contain asbestos is located at <http://www.epa.gov/Region06/6pd/asbestos/asbmatl.htm>

### **APPLICABILITY**

Most King County employees have no contact with asbestos in their work environment, because recognized friable asbestos products have been contained or removed from King County facilities. Employees who may have risk of exposure to airborne asbestos are building trades, custodians and vehicle mechanics. All projects involving contractors who may disturb building materials must be evaluated for asbestos-containing materials.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Building owners are responsible for conducting asbestos surveys prior to performing maintenance, janitorial, or construction activities. All asbestos removal at King County facilities is conducted by the Hazmat crew, part of the Department of Executive Services, Facilities Management Division. If removal is contracted out, then the Project Manager must ensure that the contractor is currently licensed for such work by the State of Washington.

Vehicle maintenance operations must ensure that new vehicles and replacement parts do not contain any asbestos. The current state contract for new vehicles specifies there be no friction products containing asbestos. There are currently no vehicle mechanics properly trained or equipped for working with asbestos-containing friction products or gaskets.

### **TRAINING**

All building trades and custodians who work in buildings with asbestos-containing building materials, and who may disturb them, must receive annual asbestos awareness training.

Hazmat workers who remove asbestos must have a current State of Washington certification to perform disturbance or removal of asbestos-containing materials. Initial and annual training are required. The Department of Executive Services, Facilities Management Division Hazmat team has a written operations and safety program specific to their responsibilities.