



Asbestos Surveys

ABC Asbestos Surveying and risk management Division was established to offer guidance on all aspects of asbestos surveys and management ensuring clients are compliant with all asbestos regulations currently in force.

It is the asbestos surveying division of ABC, working closely with clients and their representatives on many projects that ensures safe compliant Management Consultancy.

Our surveyors offer a wide range of experience gained in the public and private sectors. All have completed extensive training to BOHS standards with a minimum 5 years surveying experience. This helps us to offer innovative, practical and cost effective solutions to meet the increasing demands of those who manage property.

One of the key stages to managing asbestos effectively is to identify the type, condition, location and extent of asbestos containing materials. This can be achieved by producing an asbestos survey, and there are three different types:

Definition of Survey Types.

Asbestos surveys carried out by Asbestos Business Contractors are one of three types, or a combination of these three. The three types are defined in the Health and Safety Executive's document MDHS 100, 'Surveying, sampling and assessment of asbestos-containing materials' and are summarised below:

Type 1. Location and assessment survey (presumptive)

A visual asbestos survey, giving an assessment of the site by highlighting all suspected asbestos installations present. The survey technique relies on the ability of the surveyor to visually identify asbestos and does not include the taking of samples to confirm the presence of asbestos. Hence the surveyor has presumed the presence of asbestos using his/her experience and knowledge of asbestos in buildings.

The benefits of this survey technique are that it is quick and less expensive than other survey types.

The disadvantages are that the accuracy of the survey is:

- (a) Heavily dependent on the experience and expertise of the surveyor;
- (b) That the survey will only highlight areas of probable asbestos;
- (c) That any suspect materials shall need to be confirmed as being asbestos-free prior to any works being carried out.

There is significant scope for inaccuracy in such surveys, with the possibility of some asbestos-containing materials not being identified and some non-asbestos materials being visually identified as being asbestos.

Type 2. Standard sampling, identification and assessment survey (sampling)

This type of survey is the most common form of asbestos survey undertaken. This also requires the surveyor to identify any installations suspected as containing asbestos. These installations are then sampled, in accordance with, and at a density indicated in, MDHS 100, and analysis carried out by an independent UKAS-accredited laboratory to confirm whether the sampled materials contain asbestos or are asbestos-free. Visually similar homogeneous materials may then be referenced to sampled materials as 'strongly presumed' to contain the same asbestos type(s) and in similar quantities as the sampled material.

The benefits of this survey type are that it gives a significantly more accurate indication of asbestos installations than the walk through survey by confirming where asbestos is present, as well as information on asbestos types and quantities on which risk assessments may be based.

The disadvantages are that:

- (a) The survey requires more time and hence entails greater costs;
- (b) The survey does not include for breaking into voids or inaccessible areas and therefore asbestos installations may remain unidentified in such areas;



- (c) Because only representative samples are taken of suspected asbestos installations, it is possible that visually similar asbestos and non-asbestos materials could be cross-referenced.

Type 3. Full access sampling and identification survey (pre-demolition/major refurbishment survey)

A full-access intrusive asbestos survey extends the 'standard sampling asbestos survey' to include reasonably accessible sealed voids and the non-structural fabric of the building.

This includes breaking through partition walls, ceilings etc. to confirm the presence or absence of asbestos. Typically, this is carried out prior to demolition or refurbishment works where significant damage to the building fittings is of minor concern.

This type of survey gives greater accuracy and confidence in results obtained but will, again, take more time and hence entail greater costs. In addition, an asbestos register is not always included in this type of survey, as it is presumed that all asbestos materials identified are to be removed to facilitate demolition works. An exception to this would be if the proposed works were not to take place for a significant period of time.

Disadvantages include the degree of damage to internal surfaces that could result from the survey and the fact that, again, only representative samples are taken of suspected asbestos installations.

Surveys are carried out in accordance with HSE document MDHS 100, Asbestos Business Contractors internal quality and technical procedures, and conformed to the requirements of The Institute of Occupational Hygiene's guidance document for asbestos surveys.

Our asbestos reports are produced in accordance with HSE Guidance note MDHS 100 and are designed to be the most informative and user friendly available. The site description and Executive Summary provide the main outline, which is linked to photographs, computer generated floor plans, and the results of samples taken. Recommendations made are cost effective, practical and relate specifically to the current use of the premises, for effective risk management.

Final reports are made available to clients in hard copy, e-format, CD or through a bespoke database application enabling access to users in different locations at the same time.

Whatever the size or nature of the project, ABC's Surveying and Management Services will produce the appropriate solutions according to your needs. Contact Phil Higgins on 07894 384 325 or Tony Murphy on 07540 686 859 for instant advice.

The best impartial guidance for a safer future.

