

## UNB ASBESTOS FACT SHEET No. 2

### WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT ASBESTOS AT UNB?

Concerns have been raised in the past of possible workplace exposure to asbestos on the UNB Fredericton campus. The University, in cooperation with the WorkSafe NB, investigated the concerns, made recommendations and they were implemented by UNB.

Our most immediate focus has been to ensure that staff, faculty and students are protected from any potential exposure. However, it is important to note that there has been an effective Asbestos Management Plan in place at the UNB Fredericton campus since 1991, before such plans were mandated by provincial legislation.

### DO OTHER UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTIONS HAVE TO DEAL WITH ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIALS?

Most buildings that were built before 1980 contain asbestos in one form or another. This includes government and municipal buildings, schools, financial institutions, and even homes. Most universities in North America face the same concerns about asbestos as UNB and manage them in the same way.

### HOW DO WE KNOW WHERE ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIALS ARE LOCATED AT THE UNIVERSITY?

It must be assumed that almost all buildings on campus contain Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) in one form or another. Comprehensive building audits were performed and completed for all the buildings on the Fredericton campus early in 2007. A Management Database was created and is kept updated with additional surveys and management of the Asbestos containing materials on campus. However, most friable ACM, the kind that can release microscopic fibres to the air, and that can lead to human exposure via inhalation, is in service tunnels, mechanical rooms, or boiler rooms, and is not readily accessible to faculty, students, or members of the public.

### WHAT IS UNB DOING TO ENSURE THAT STAFF AND STUDENTS ARE NOT EXPOSED TO FRIABLE ASBESTOS?

1. Publicly accessible high traffic areas have been examined to ensure that Asbestos Containing Materials in these areas are in proper condition and not subject to damage or deterioration.
2. The University conducted air monitoring of all major facilities on campus in September 2006, to determine whether there was any indication of asbestos in the air. Of more than 160 air samples taken, all fibre counts were below regulatory criteria. These results clearly show that overall air quality is safe.
3. The University has completed an overall preliminary inventory of all buildings on campus. This inventory identifies buildings and areas where there may be a higher risk of exposure to friable asbestos, for furthermore comprehensive testing.
4. The University has an Asbestos Management Program. This process includes the participation of representatives of the campus community and lays out the processes for the management of asbestos on campus to ensure that it does not become a health risk in future.

### WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT ASBESTOS?

UNBF Faculty and Staff who have concerns regarding any potential exposure to asbestos should discuss them with their Supervisor or Department Head. Any concerns regarding the building and the location of asbestos containing materials should be directed to Capital Planning & Operations (Work Control Centre 453-4889; fm@unb.ca). The Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHS, 453-5075; safety@unb.ca) may also be contacted at any time by Students, Faculty and Staff for information on the risks associated with asbestos in the workplace.

Additional information can be obtained from the websites listed below, including the US EPA and Health Canada.

<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/asbestos/>

<http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/>