

UNB ASBESTOS FACT SHEET No. 4

IS UNB A SAFE PLACE TO WORK AND STUDY?

Yes. The University of New Brunswick recognizes its responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment and is taking all measures necessary to ensure that staff and students are not exposed to asbestos fibres.

Inspections for Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM), and airborne fibre testing, have been completed in publicly accessible areas through all of the major facilities on campus by an independent environmental consultant. These tests have shown that there is no health risk from asbestos associated with day-to-day activities or occupancy in those buildings. Air quality testing will continue periodically throughout all buildings at the UNB Fredericton Campus, to ensure the safest possible environment.

Asbestos had been found in settled dust in some Mechanical Equipment Rooms, although testing for airborne asbestos did not show significant numbers of airborne fibres in these rooms. The Mechanical Equipment Rooms have been cleaned and asbestos repaired, encapsulated or removed, as appropriate. These areas are generally not accessible, except to authorized University maintenance staff.

WHAT IS UNB DOING ABOUT ASBESTOS ON THE FREDERICTON CAMPUS?

There has been an Asbestos Management Plan in place at UNB since 1991, even before such plans were mandated by provincial legislation. In 2007 the Asbestos Management Plan was reviewed and updated as needed.

- The University follows New Brunswick regulations governing asbestos in the workplace, including "A Code of Practice for Working with Materials Containing Asbestos in New Brunswick" and all work procedures must conform to this standard. Training of University maintenance staff and others who may come in contact with, or work with ACM, will continue to be conducted and evaluated.
- The survey, inventory, and periodic reassessment of all suspected and asbestos containing materials will continue. When repairs and maintenance work are undertaken in these buildings, proper precautions and procedures are taken to ensure there is no exposure to workers and others who may be affected by the work.
- The University has developed work practices and procedures that will allow renovation, construction, or emergency maintenance to be performed safely without exposing employees, building occupants, or members of the public to airborne asbestos fibres. When major building renovations are planned, comprehensive asbestos audits are undertaken prior to the work to determine the location of asbestos. If ACM is found, it will normally be removed by an asbestos abatement contractor prior to the construction activity.

The University has an asbestos air monitoring program in place to help ensure that airborne asbestos fibre concentrations do not exceed applicable standards. Testing is conducted by independent asbestos consultants to ensure that there are no risks to staff or students from asbestos.

The University, in cooperation with an external asbestos management consultant and in consultation with Worksafe NB has updated and consolidated all the elements already in place into a comprehensive Asbestos Management Program. This process included the participation of representatives of the campus community and laid 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 and Health Canada and US EPA.

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

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

