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**Subject:** VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TALK: Asbestos Awareness - To all Cleaning & Property Services Colleagues

**INTERNAL COMMUNICATION: VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TALK: Asbestos Awareness - To Cleaning & Property Services Colleagues**

Good Afternoon,

Hope you are well and reason you have received this email is to increase you awareness of asbestos in a working environment...

**Purpose / objectives:** This virtual toolbox talk is to increase colleagues awareness of types of asbestos containing materials (ACMs), where ACMs can be found and the steps you need to take protect yourself

**Hazards / risks:** Asbestos kills more people in the UK than are killed in road accidents Every year, around 5,000 people, from all industries, die from asbestos-related diseases You need to be aware of the hazards of asbestos, where it can be found, and what you need to do, otherwise, it could kill you

**Where you will find asbestos:** The asbestos removal industry estimates there are over 3,000 different types of ACM products. Asbestos can be found:

- In insulation and sprayed coatings used for:
  - boilers, plant and pipework (some are obvious, but some are hidden in underfloor ducting)
  - fire protection steelwork - hidden behind false ceilings - in thermal and acoustic insulation of buildings
- In insulating board used in:
  - fire protection to doors, protected exits and steelwork
  - claddings on walls and ceilings, internal walls, partitions and suspended ceiling tiles
  - fire blankets
- In asbestos cement, which is found as:
  - corrugated roofing and cladding sheets of buildings
  - flat sheets for partitions - cladding and other door facings
  - rainwater gutters and downpipes
- In other products:
  - some textured coatings and paints
  - friction materials (such as brake linings and clutch plates)
  - flash guards and components within equipment

**How asbestos can affect you:** When ACMs are disturbed fibres are released into the air.

- These fibres can easily be breathed in
- The fibres penetrate deep into the lungs where they remain, leading to diseases such as asbestosis (fibrous scarring of the lungs), lung cancer and mesothelioma (cancer of the lining of the lung).
- Mesothelioma is incurable, and is always fatal Smokers are at increased risk of asbestos-related diseases

**Hazardous work:** People involved in building repair, maintenance and refurbishment, for example plumbers, electricians and joiners are particularly at risk – it is estimated that around 20 workers or former workers from the construction sector in the UK die each week

- There is a legal requirement that requires workers who may be exposed to asbestos (such as those working in existing buildings built before the year 2000) to receive asbestos awareness training
- Prior to undertaking any work in buildings (built before the year 2000) that has the potential to disturb ACMs, employers must ensure that a suitable survey is undertaken and that work is planned to prevent workers from being exposed. This may involve removal or encapsulation of the ACMs, which must always be done by a competent contractor who will often need to hold the appropriate license awarded by the HSE
- Make sure that you are given information regarding the possible presence of ACMs before working in any building built before the year 2000 If you are not sure what a material is, do not disturb it until you are sure.

- If you think that you have discovered or disturbed an ACM, stop work immediately and tell your supervisor

Please also see the links below for more HSE & company information...

**HSE website** and links below:

- HSE – Asbestos Essentials - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/a0.pdf>
- HSE – Lifting Equipment at Work – A Brief Guide - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg290.htm>
- HSE – Manual Handling at Work – A Brief Guide - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.htm>
- HSE – Slips & Trips – A Brief Guide - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/cleaning/topics/slips.htm>
- HSE – Working at Height – Safe Use of Ladders - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf>
- HSE - COSHH - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics/whatdo.htm>
- HSE – COVID-19 - <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

**STAFF ZONE** is a bespoke intranet for all McSence colleagues with company information in one place - to access this click on this [Company Policies | McSence](#) and enter password staffzone123

Any feedback is most welcome and going forward we will be sharing more of this information on a regular basis.

*Warmest regards, Martha*

**Martha Convie**

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