

Asbestos - What's that got to do with golf?

Tutorial Nine

I mention asbestos and I am sure all of the greenkeeping fraternity and Secretary/Managers are thinking, "what's that got to do with me". Well let me see if I can shed some light on the subject.

LEGISLATION

Just over six months ago, on May 21, 2004, tough new asbestos regulations, Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 (CAWR 2002), came fully into force in England and Wales. This followed an 18 month lead in period designed to encourage and cajole commercial property owners, tenants and managers to assess proactively the risks from residual asbestos in their buildings.

DUTY

So where does a golf club fit in. Each and every golf club in the country has a legal bound duty to develop an 'Asbestos Register' which is designed to list all contents of asbestos in their premises and the type of asbestos it is.

SOME BACKGROUND ON ASBESTOS

Asbestos is not always an immediate hazard. In fact, if asbestos can be maintained in good condition, it is recommended that it be left alone and periodic surveillance performed to monitor its condition. It is only when asbestos containing materials (ACM) are disturbed or the materials become damaged that the risk to exposure is increased. When the materials are damaged, the fibres can separate and may become airborne.

It was discovered in the 1930's that when the microscopic asbestos fibres - up to 100 times finer than human hair - become airborne they can be inhaled. The fibres are so inert that they cannot be dispelled from the lungs, and can cause cancer. Asbestos is made up of microscopic bundles of fibres that may become airborne when disturbed. Inhaled asbestos fibres can cause significant respiratory health problems.

TYPES OF ASBESTOS

Chrysotile	White asbestos - Not as highly dangerous.
Amosite	Brown asbestos - Highly dangerous.
Crocidolite	Blue asbestos - Most dangerous type.

WHAT DO GOLF CLUBS NEED TO DO?

1. Find out if your premises contain any asbestos.
2. Assess the risk (i.e. Is the asbestos releasing fibres?).
3. Make a plan to manage the risks.
4. Generate the asbestos register and keep it on file.

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or www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/manageasbestos.pdf



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