



# MEMORANDUM

**To:** UBC Faculty, Staff and Students  
UBC Building Safety Committees

**From:** Guy Champagne, Health & Safety Associate Facilities, Safety & Risk Services

**Date:** March 30, 2023

**Subject:** Typical Use Asbestos

## Typical Use Asbestos

Historically, as asbestos only required minimal refining prior to its use in manufacturing, it was a very inexpensive and effective constituent of many products. One of the sectors that utilized asbestos most frequently was the construction industry.

Asbestos was added to building materials to give them strength and fire proofing. As a consequence, virtually all of the buildings constructed prior to 1985 contain some form of an asbestos building product. Some mechanical systems asbestos product have been found in in building constructed up to 1994, duct mastic and flanged gasket materials.

The use of friable asbestos in most products was banned in the early 1970s but some manufacturers that produce products such as brake linings and clutch facings have found no other effective replacement for asbestos.

A full ban of asbestos materials was enacted in Canada in 2017 with the exception of some military equipment application that are still permitted.

## Asbestos Categories

**Friable:** products which contain asbestos that when dry, can easily be crumbled or powdered by hand. Examples of friable products are: mechanical insulation, sprayed insulation (fire resistant, acoustic, thermal, condensation control and decorative millboards).

**Non-friable:** products where the asbestos is bound in a tight matrix and will not easily shed asbestos fibres under normal day to day use. Examples of non-friable products are: roof shingles, asbestos cement pipes, caulking compounds, floor tiles and joint cements.

Other products that may fall in either category, depending on their condition, are textiles and papers. Friable sprayed or trowelled asbestos insulating formulations applied for fire protection, thermal or acoustic insulation were used until late 1970's

Mechanical insulation was applied to pipes, boilers, etc. until the late 1970's. Acoustic or decorative finishes that were sprayed or trowelled in place were also applied until the late 1970's

BUILDING PROJECT	FRIABILITY	DATES OF USE
Mechanical Insulation	high	1926 - mid 1970's
Spray Insulation	high	1935 - 1974
Texture Coat	moderate - high	1950 - mid 1970's
Floor Tile	low	1950 - late 1970's
Drywall Taping Compound	low - moderate	1945 - late 1970's
Cement Pipe	low	1935 - present
Brake Linings	low	1940 - present
Duct Wrap	moderate - high	1920 - mid 1970's
Textiles / Gaskets	low - moderate	1920 - present
Roofing Material	low	1920 - present
Ceiling Tiles (all removed from UBC building)	low - moderate	1950 - 1970's
Cement Board	low	1930 - present

If you have any further questions, please contact me at 604-822-8772 or e-mail [guy.champagne@ubc.ca](mailto:guy.champagne@ubc.ca).

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