ASBESTOS REMOVAL OR DEMOLITION

Asbestos is a health hazard. A generic name for the fibrous variety of six naturally occurring minerals that have been used in commercial and residential building products, it is made up of long, thin, fiber bundles that are flexible and easily separated. Until recent years, asbestos was commonly used as a component of insulation, shingles, floor tiles, and other parts of the home. Elevated concentrations of airborne asbestos can occur after asbestos-containing materials are disturbed by cutting, sanding or other remodeling activities. Improper attempts to remove these materials can release asbestos fibers into the air, increasing asbestos levels and endangering people's health. Diseases associated with asbestos exposure include lung cancer, mesothelioma (a cancer of the lining of the chest and abdominal cavity), and asbestosis (in which the lungs become scarred with fibrous tissue).

The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Western North Carolina Regional Air Quality Agency (WNCRAQA) have developed rules and regulations for the removal of asbestos-containing materials from buildings. WNCRAQA must be notified of plans to demolish or remodel any building no matter the age, including residential, commercial, industrial or public buildings; or plans to remove any asbestos-containing material. These buildings must be surveyed by accredited asbestos inspectors prior to beginning any demolition or removal activities, to determine the amount of asbestos present and the applicable rules. If present, a permit must be obtained from WNCRAQA before any asbestos-containing materials are to be removed from a building. All asbestos-containing materials must be removed before a building may be demolished (this is also the case for buildings burned for fire training purposes).

Demolition or removal of asbestos must be handled so that fibers are not released into the air. Asbestos-containing materials must be kept wet during removal. Materials that easily crumble in your hand (friable) must be removed by asbestos-accredited professionals prior to demolition. Asbestos cement board, also known as transite siding or shingles, must also be removed prior to demolition.

The WNC Regional Air Quality Agency charges a fee for reviewing residential and commercial permits. This fee is for reviewing building plans and permits to verify that owners and contractors are addressing federal, state and local asbestos rules and regulations for the protection of public health.

Please call (828) 250-6777 if you have any questions or need additional information on removal of asbestos-containing materials.

Fee for Permit Review: \$25 – Residential Structure

\$50 - Commercial Structure