



SAM is the DSHS resource toolkit to effectively identify, document and manage asbestos in your school for AHERA compliance.

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What is asbestos? Asbestos is a naturally-occurring mineral that is resistant to temperature, fire, sound, and corrosion. Because of its durability, it has been used as a building material in shingles, tiles, ceilings and insulation. From the 1940s to 1970s, asbestos was commonly used in schools.

Why is asbestos dangerous? Asbestos is a health hazard, and its use is highly regulated by both OSHA and the EPA. Asbestos fibers are too small to be seen with the naked eye (up to 700 times smaller than human hair) and, when disturbed, can be inhaled by children and adults, piercing lung tissue. Asbestos has been linked to serious cancers, mesothelioma and asbestosis, and symptoms may develop over 15 to 40 years. *According to information from the Children's Environmental Health Network, children are particularly vulnerable to asbestos.*

Asbestos in Schools: According to a 2005 report by the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University, more than half of the 11,384 school buildings in Texas were built prior to 1978. Since peak asbestos usage occurred through the late 1970s, older schools are very likely to contain asbestos.

About the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act: AHERA requires local education agencies to inspect their schools and prepare plans to prevent asbestos hazards, and to determine the extent to which asbestos poses a danger to human health. The act mandates school administrators of public and private non-profit schools in Texas to identify, document and manage asbestos-containing materials in their school.

Get Started Now: Remember, compliance can be simple. Access resources, tools and more information at www.SAMforTexas.org .

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