

WorkSafeBC and Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA)

Supporting immigrants and newcomers in asbestos certification

Background

Asbestos was widely used in British Columbia as a building material until the early 1990s, and it can be found in many older buildings. If it is disturbed in a renovation or demolition, the fibres can be released into the air. Exposure to asbestos remains the number one killer of workers in this province.

Training, certification, and licensing requirements are now in effect to help keep workers safe from the danger of asbestos. As of January 1, 2024, asbestos abatement contractors must be licensed to operate in British Columbia, and anyone performing asbestos abatement work must complete mandatory safety training and obtain certificates. These requirements help keep workers, their co-workers, and their families healthy and safe.

This updated guide provides information to support organizations that interact with immigrants and newcomers who may do asbestos work, helping them to learn about the new training and certification requirements. The guide includes:

- Links to online resources about asbestos training and certification
- Links to videos about asbestos safety and asbestos training & certification, available in multiple languages
- Answers to frequently asked questions about asbestos training and certification

Refusing unsafe work

Workers have the right and the responsibility to refuse unsafe work and may not be disciplined or penalized for doing so. If a worker is doing renovation or demolition work in older buildings, they may be working with asbestos. Since asbestos removal work can only be done by trained and certified workers, workers must refuse to do this work if they are not certified.

For more information, visit [Refusing unsafe work](#).

We appreciate your partnership to help make a difference to workers across the province.

Resources

For settlement agencies

Linking to worksafebc.com

Please consider adding a link on your website to direct people to information on asbestos requirements on worksafebc.com: [Asbestos training, certification & licensing](#). This page includes information on who needs certification and licensing, and how to find approved training providers.

Visit our [For temporary foreign workers and new immigrant workers: Asbestos training and certification](#) page for more information helpful for organizations that interact with immigrants and newcomers who do asbestos work.

For workers

Asbestos awareness video

We have created a video to introduce workers to the hazards of asbestos and the requirements for training and certification. This video is available in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, and Spanish.

- [For workers: Learn about asbestos training and certification](#)

In September and October 2023, we presented two virtual sessions for asbestos abatement workers to learn about mandatory requirements to help keep workers safe from the dangers of asbestos. A [recording of the October session](#) is available.

Resources on worksafebc.com

- [Asbestos training, certification & licensing: information on who needs certification and how to find approved training providers](#)
- [Question & answer: Asbestos certification](#): for answers to questions about certification most often asked by asbestos abatement workers.
- [Question & answer: Asbestos licensing and certification](#): for answers to questions about licensing and certification most often asked by asbestos abatement employers, with information that may also be relevant to workers.

Information in multiple languages

The following pages on worksafebc.com provide information on asbestos training and certification requirements:

- [Chinese \(Simplified\) | 针对工人：石棉培训和认证](#)
- [Chinese \(Traditional\) | 工人須知：石棉培訓和認證](#)
- [Punjabi | ਕਾਮਿਆਂ ਲਈ: ਐਸਬੈਸਟਾਸ ਟ੍ਰੇਨਿੰਗ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਟੀਫਿਕੇਸ਼ਨ](#)
- [Spanish | Para los trabajadores: Capacitación y certificación en asbesto](#)

In addition, this information sheet provides information to workers in any industry about their workplace rights, and has been translated into multiple languages:

- [Getting a Job? Ask Questions About Safety](#)

For more information

Settlement agencies and workers can call WorkSafeBC's Prevention Information Line with additional questions: 604.276.3100 or toll-free 1.888.621.7233.