

26 June 2017

Glossary of asbestos terms (P to R)

Asbestos terminology may be second nature to us, but we appreciate it may be unfamiliar to many people.

Over the last few months we have listed the most common words/terms and explained their meaning. Here we continue our Glossary with P to R.

Personal Air Test: An air test affixed to a person and carried out to assess the individual's risks and confirm the adequacy of respiratory protection. It is recommended that personal monitoring is performed in 10% of jobs involving enclosure entry. Used to check;

- the effectiveness of control measures, i.e. that engineering controls are working as they should, to their design specification and do not need maintenance or repair;
- to find out whether a control limit is exceeded so that appropriate RPE can be selected;
- to confirm that the RPE in use is capable of providing the appropriate degree of protection;
- to determine whether the action level is likely to be exceeded;
- for medical surveillance records;
- to support current and future risk assessments.

Plan of Works: The plan by which the Licensed Asbestos Removal Contractor will set out the transit routes, location of skip, enclosure, location of Negative Pressure Unit etc. Often in the same document as the **Method Statement**.

PPE: Personal Protective Equipment, such as masks, overalls, gloves, footwear.

Phase Contrast Microscopy (PCM): This is the method used for assessment of air samples. After air sampling, the Analyst will check the final flow rate and collect samples for phase contrast microscopy analysis. Fibres of appropriate dimensions on a measured area of filter are counted visually using phase contrast microscopy (PCM) and the number concentration of fibres in the air calculated and a pass/fail given relative to the clearance indicator level (0.01f/ml).

Polarised Light Microscopy (PLM): The principal method used to scientifically identify which of the six asbestos types is present on the basis of their exact optical properties.

Project Management: Term often used to manage a particular project on behalf of a Client e.g. removal works.

Reassurance Air Test: Air sampling which may be conducted in certain circumstances to confirm that the residual asbestos fibre concentrations are <0.01 f/ml. For example, after the removal of an enclosure.

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Refurbishment / Demolition Survey: This type of survey looks beyond the surface of the property and its aim is to find asbestos materials hidden within the structure of the building. It is an intrusive method of inspection and sampling and should be undertaken prior to any demolition/major refurbishment works, to prevent accidental exposure of maintenance and demolition workers to asbestos.

Respirator Zone: Where the airborne asbestos fibre level is likely to or does exceed the Control Limit the area affected must be designated as such and RPE must be worn.

RPE: Respiratory Protective Equipment: the different types of face masks worn appropriate to the risk.

RICE: Regular Interlaboratory Counting Exchanges. The RICE scheme tests proficiency in the use of the optical microscopy method of counting asbestos fibres as described in the Health and Safety Executive publication HSG248.

Look out for our final glossary next month!

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