

# Safety Bulletin

A serious incident has taken place



## Work in buildings that may have asbestos containing materials

Issued to: **Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and accredited contractors**

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Location: Various

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## Overview

This bulletin is being issued following a number of incidents and close calls in which staff and contractors have been working in Operational Property and had the potential to inadvertently disturb Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs).

ACMs in good condition do not represent a risk to health. If they are disturbed or damaged they can release asbestos fibres that if inhaled can have the potential to cause health problems.

The majority of the incidents occurred as a result of the relevant project not obtaining sufficient information about asbestos potentially being located within buildings prior to starting work.

If you are carrying out tasks which require drilling holes, breaking out or even pulling cables in anything that may have ACMs then there should be a safe system of work and correct methodology included in documents such as the Safe Work Pack (SWP), PCIP, Works Package Plan or Task Risk Control Sheet.

The location of known asbestos at Operational Property can be found in the ARMS Database. ARMS can be accessed here - <https://arms.networkrail.co.uk/>.

If no information can be found for a location or the building cannot be located in the system, it MUST be ASSUMED TO CONTAIN ASBESTOS.

Labelling of ACMs may not be consistent. The lack of consistent signage should not be used to identify that ACMs are not present - please always refer to ARMS. Network Rail staff can obtain a username and password for ARMS by following the instructions on this link: <https://arms.networkrail.co.uk/>.

A guide to using the system can be found under 'useful information' on the homepage screen once logged in.

If a known or suspected Asbestos Containing Material is damaged or disturbed, the following steps must be taken to reduce the risk of exposure:

- Immediately cease activity in the area.
- Secure the area and restrict access using appropriate measures - e.g. signage and key withdrawal.
- Report it to the Site Manager and Line Manager and communicate to Asset Management.

Await confirmation that no asbestos is present before resuming work.

## Discussion Points

- Would you know what to do if you suspected your work had disturbed Asbestos Containing Material?
- Are you up to date with your Asbestos Awareness eLearning?
- Would you know who to ask if you needed more information on Asbestos Containing Materials?
- Are you aware of the health risks that exposure to asbestos fibres can cause?