

Case Study - Decorative Plaster on Ceilings



Project Description:

Asbestos disturbance high-rise apartment building lobby renovations.

Visual Assessment/Sampling:

Troweled-on plaster is classified as a surfacing material by the EPA and requires 3, 5, 7 or 9 bulk samples (depending on quantity) be collected to rebut asbestos content. This lobby ceiling was found to contain two distinct plaster layers. The top white decorative layer (about 1/4" thick) contained 3-5% chrysotile asbestos. The bottom brown coat layer did not contain asbestos.

Response Action:

Due to the planned disturbance of the ceiling during lobby renovations, the decorative asbestos containing layer of plaster had to be removed. This plaster in its intact state was non-friable. Removal activity disturbs the material causing it to become friable, hence was performed under Class I Asbestos Work conditions.

Removal was performed by separating the decorative layer from the brown coat layer. Asbestos work was completed in a negative pressure enclosure in accordance with City of Philadelphia Asbestos Regulations.

AET's Experience:

Asbestos was added to plaster due to its high tensile strength and used in building construction between 1920 and 1980. Asbestos use in plaster was banned in 1978 but has been found in buildings constructed as late as 1986. Asbestos is found in low concentrations. Multiple random sampling locations and sampling of all layers must be completed by a licensed asbestos building inspector to rebut asbestos content. Asbestos removal must be performed by a licensed asbestos contractor. This project entailed the removal of 3600 sf of decorative plaster at a cost of \$30,000.00 and was completed in ten 8 hour work shifts and included the removal of 1200 sf of floor tile.

When you need professional help or advice, email Alan Sutherland, CIH, CHMM at a.sutherland@aetinc.biz or call 610-891-0114. We provide nationwide services; phone consultations are free. Check out the full range of environmental contracting/consulting services we provide at our website www.aetinc.biz.