



HBI

Healthy Buildings International

HBI, 229 Hyde End Road, Spencers Wood, Berkshire RG7 1BU, United Kingdom

NEWS UPDATE



Volume 4 Issue 2

# ASBESTOS! YOUR NEW LEGAL DUTY

Many of our clients' buildings have now been surveyed for the presence of asbestos. However, Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 now requires you to take additional action to safeguard occupants. This includes:

- Making a written record of the location and condition of asbestos, and keeping this record up to date.
- Assessing the likelihood of anyone being exposed to ACMs - asbestos containing materials. Each location and type of material must be assessed individually, and consideration given to the risk of ACMs being disturbed or damaged by maintenance repair, refurbishment or any activity. This is because, for asbestos to pose a risk, asbestos fibres must be released and become airborne.
- Preparing and implementing a plan to manage the risk of airborne fibres.

This includes ensuring that asbestos containing materials are kept in a good state of repair or removed, and that information on the location and condition of such materials is given to anyone potentially at risk.

### Essential planning

It is vitally important to inspect the state of any asbestos to check that it has not



Asbestos-containing materials must be kept in a good state of repair.

deteriorated or been damaged. As a minimum, the material should be inspected every six to twelve months even if it is in good condition and not likely to be disturbed (and even more often if it is in a place where it might be damaged). The system of inspection must be written into the plan, and any records/drawings must be updated to reflect any changes.

Finally, there should be periodic checks to ensure that your safety arrangements are working, and that people are fully aware of their responsibilities in compliance, duty and day-to-day management.

### HBI asbestos assistance

Many organisations are now turning to HBI's [www.RecordsForBuildings.com](http://www.RecordsForBuildings.com) for assistance in managing the risks from asbestos. This is a secure web-based repository for statutory building records, including - as well as asbestos - legionella risk assessment and control, health and safety, and disabled access.

Contractors who are due to attend your site can now view your asbestos plan and be kept completely up to date with the latest information on the location and condition of your ACMs, and there is no chance of the information going astray.

## LEGISLATION WATCH

Subject	Progress
<b>Asbestos:</b> A new legal duty on employers to manage the risks posed by asbestos in non-domestic premises under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002	New duty came into force on 21 May 2004.
<b>Disability Discrimination:</b> The new law under Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires businesses and service providers to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of the premises to avoid discrimination.	Final phase of Part III came into force on 1 October 2004.
<b>Noise:</b> HSC Consultative Document on proposed new regulations places tougher legal duties on employers to control exposure to harmful noise levels.	Proposed changes to the Noise at Work Regulations 1989, including the lowering of the 1st and 2nd action levels, are expected to come into force by February 2006.
<b>Fire:</b> Government proposal to replace 60 different sets of fire safety regulations with a single Fire Safety Act is based on the principles of risk assessment.	If approved by Parliament, the proposed changes are expected to come into force during 2005.
<b>Working At Heights:</b> Proposed new regulations will set specific control measures that must be followed whilst working at height.	The new regulations are expected to come into force during late 2004. However, some duties may be phased in over a transitional period.

For more information, please call or simply log on to:

[www.hbi.co.uk](http://www.hbi.co.uk)

# HBI

HEALTHY  
BUILDINGS,  
HEALTHY  
PEOPLE

## Air Quality

- Air quality monitoring
- Design consultation
- Building system health
- Fluid dynamic modelling
- Dust and mite testing
- Indoor air quality testing
- Microbial investigations
- Pre-occupancy surveys
- Workplace smoking policy

## Water Quality

- Legionella testing and risk assessment
- Potable water testing and vending machine appraisals
- Water treatment consultation
- Pre-occupancy surveys

## Occupational Health

- Asbestos: identification, monitoring and management
- Computer room evaluation
- Magnetic field surveys
- Stack emission testing
- Local exhaust ventilation testing
- Occupational hygiene surveys
- Noise assessments
- Vulnerability assessments

## Health and Safety

- Health and safety audits
- Statutory compliance
- Disability access audits
- Food hygiene surveys
- Display screen assessments
- Stress audits

# LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE BUBBLES OVER AGAIN

Legionnaires' disease is again in the news, and the spotlight is on spas as a major source of infection. Did you know that around 10% of the 300 Legionnaires' disease outbreaks reported annually are attributed to spas? Or that during 2003, spa outbreaks resulted in 3 deaths?

There has been a huge growth in spa facilities, ideal breeding grounds for legionella bacteria. If you are responsible for spa maintenance, or for the management of any indoor water system, it is vital to be aware of the dangers. A recent study by the Health Protection Agency found that 26 of the 100 pools it tested contained legionella bacteria, despite the fact that 16 had passed current safety inspections.

## What is Legionnaires' disease?

A pneumonia-like infection caused when individuals inhale water droplets or spray that contain legionella bacteria. Early symptoms include muscle aches, tiredness, headaches and a dry cough or fever. Typically between 10% to 15% of victims will die, with those particularly susceptible being people over 50, especially men.

Legionella bacteria occur naturally, and can be found in most outdoor water systems. Any poorly maintained indoor water systems connected to a spray outlet – such as cooling towers, humidifiers, fountains and particularly showers – prove an ideal medium for the organism to grow and cause infection.

## The susceptibility of spas

Spas baths generally operate with high water temperatures, placing a greater demand on the disinfection and filtration systems. Poor maintenance of these can lead to the build-up and spread of legionella bacteria, after which spa jets can produce aerosols, which can subsequently be inhaled resulting in infection.

## GUIDELINES UNDER REVIEW

In light of the particular problem in spas, the Health Protection Agency is currently reviewing its spa guidelines in conjunction with the Health and Safety Executive, and legislation is likely to change.

HBI will inform you quickly of any developments.

## NEW E-LEARNING COURSE ON MOULDS

HBI is pleased to announce a new state-of-the-art e-Learning course – "Moulds in Commercial Buildings" – to help you understand moulds and what to do about them. The course was produced at our headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia, in response to a national, media-driven concern about toxic moulds throughout the USA.

What are moulds? How do they enter buildings? What damage can they do to your building and its occupants? And how can you prevent these unwanted invaders? HBI tells you how.

### 24 hour access

Our easy-to-understand 5-part programme provides you with everything you need to know on how to prevent moulds, how to test for them and what remedial action to take.

The programme is based upon our 24 years+ experience

studying moulds in no less than 4,000 buildings in forty-five countries, and on our long experience of delivering training seminars and solutions. Because it is Internet based, you and your employees can have access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, via a simple dial-up connection.

*"I have been training people on mould and related indoor air quality issues for over 24 years, and have never seen a solution that better addresses the problem"* says Gray Robertston, the President of HBI inc.

### Allergies

Evidence suggesting that toxic moulds can cause fatal illnesses is still inconclusive. However, there is ample evidence that many moulds may well trigger allergies, or exacerbate the condition for those with asthma. For this reason alone, visible

mould growths in occupied areas should not be tolerated, and we advise all our clients to remove such visible growth. This advice is also pure commonsense, simply because any mould growing on a substrate is doing what moulds do naturally; destroying the substrate by attempting to digest it.

*Other HBI e-Learning packages include 'Asbestos Awareness', 'Display Screen Equipment' and 'Workplace Fire Safety'.*



Stachybotrys growing on wet wallboard