Health hazards of asbestos

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a strong, fire-resistant mineral fibre. In the past, asbestos was used for insulation against heat and noise, as well as for fire protection. Asbestos was also added to materials such as cement and plaster to give them more structural strength. Exposure to asbestos fibres may result in asbestosis, lung cancer, or mesothelioma (cancer affecting the lining of the chest or abdominal cavity)

What are the hazards of asbestos?

Renovating or demolishing houses containing asbestos products can release asbestos fibres. These fibres are extremely fine and can stay in the air for hours.
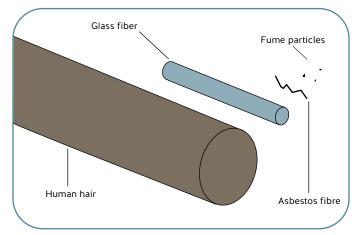
Breathing in asbestos fibres may cause serious health problems, including lung disease and cancer.

Asbestosis is the name given to scarring and stiffening of the lungs caused by inhaling asbestos dust over many years. Asbestosis makes breathing difficult and may lead to fatal diseases such as pneumonia and heart disease.

Exposure to asbestos can also cause lung cancer and mesothelioma.

Asbestos-related diseases usually develop many years after a person has been exposed to asbestos. The risk of developing these diseases increases with the amount of asbestos in the air you inhale and the length of time you are exposed. Smokers are at an increased risk.

For more tips on how you can keep your workplace safe, visit **worksafebc.com/ asbestosbeaware**.

Asbestos fibres are extremely fine. The diagram above shows the relative sizes of a human hair, a glass fibre, an asbestos fibre, and fume particles.

Record of meeting

Project			
Address	City	Province	Postal code
Employer	Supervisor		
Date (yyyy-mm-dd)	Time	Shift	
Number in crew	Number attending		

Other safety issues or suggestions made by crew members

Record of those attending

Name (please print)	Signature	Company
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		

Manager's remarks

Manager's signature	Supervisor's signature