

HAZARDOUS BUILDING MATERIALS

Hazardous building materials or "HBM" can present risks to human health and the environment. It is important to properly remove or abate HBM before demolition, restoration, or redevelopment of a building. HBM is prevalent in older buildings, such as on many brownfield sites. Common HBMs include:

- Asbestos
- Lead paint
- Polychlorinated biphenyls or "PCBs"
- Mercury
- Treated wood
- Mold

RISKS AND RULES

Failure to mitigate HBM in buildings can expose future occupants to these hazards. Without proper precautions, disturbance of HBM can result in the release of contaminants to the environment and dangerous exposures for workers and the general public.

Potential health risks associated with HBM exposure include cancer, developmental and reproductive issues, organ damage, mesothelioma, and diseases of the nervous, endocrine, immune, digestive, and respiratory systems. These contaminants are regulated under numerous state and federal laws, including the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) that regulates reporting, testing, cleanup, and disposal of many HBMs.

SIMPLIFIED BREAKDOWN OF REMEDIATION PROCESS:



Identify and sample suspected hazardous materials, followed by a risk assessment based on material condition, location, and intended building use.



Develop a cleanup plan detailing methods, controls, and procedures for safe handling and abatement.



Isolate affected areas, apply engineering controls to prevent contamination spread, and remove or encapsulate HBM as appropriate.



Conduct monitoring, confirm cleanup effectiveness through testing, and document handling, transport, and disposal.



HBM wastes are also sometimes dumped illegally on vacant land or unsecured brownfield sites.

CLEANUP METHODS

During remediation or "abatement," HBM is removed or contained to prevent human exposure. These processes are regulated by federal and state agencies and conducted by certified professionals using approved methods.

MORE INFORMATION

Your state and local health departments can provide information on potential HBM health risks, methods to prevent exposure, applicable rules and regulations, testing and cleanup procedures, and licensing of qualified consultants and contractors.

[Asbestos Factsheet - ATSDR](#)

[Mercury Factsheet - ATSDR](#)

[Lead Factsheet - ATSDR](#)

[PCBs Factsheet - ATSDR](#)



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