Asbestos Health and Safety Update

This message was sent to SFU staff and faculty on behalf of Martin Pochurko, Vice-President, Finance & Administration.

I’m writing this morning to share an important health and safety update regarding asbestos in Burnaby Campus buildings and to share the plans, processes and resources that are in place to keep you safe.

The health and safety of the SFU community is always our first priority. First and foremost, I want to reassure you that asbestos itself, when undisturbed, poses no health risk to the campus community.

SFU’s Burnaby Campus was built at a time when it was commonplace to use building materials containing asbestos, which we now know to be hazardous. Over the years, the university has removed asbestos whenever possible, however, there are still buildings on campus that have building materials with asbestos in them.

Since 1986, an Asbestos Exposure Control Plan has been in place to identify and inventory locations of asbestos, inform workers and contractors of its presence, educate and train on safe work procedures, and in the event of exposure, notify as appropriate. The asbestos management practices in the Plan align with and are in compliance with WorkSafeBC policies, guidelines and standards.

The Plan is updated regularly with an inventory of the locations on campus where asbestos is known to be present. This summer, we are undertaking a re-inventory of locations across the Burnaby Campus that contain asbestos, including potential newly identified locations, and you may see workers in your building assessing areas that may contain asbestos and documenting any improvements or repairs that need to be made. Additionally, a new database of locations on campus known to have asbestos will be available to the campus community within the next month.

If at any time you are concerned about potential exposure to asbestos or discover that building material has been disturbed that may contain asbestos please follow these simple steps:

- Leave the area immediately
- Notify your supervisor
- Contact Facilities Services (778-782-3582) and Environmental Health & Research Safety (778-782-4978 or 778-782-3011)

To learn more about the Asbestos Exposure Control Plan and to access other resources on asbestos management on campus, please visit the Safety and Risk Services website here.

If you have any questions regarding asbestos management on campus please contact Melinda Skura, Senior Director of Environmental Health and Research Safety at melinda_skura@sfu.ca or local 27264.

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