

Science Museum Group Asbestos Policy

The SMG Asbestos Policy is structured for the common good of the SMG organisation, which strives for excellence and on-going improvement in Asbestos Management. For the avoidance of doubt this policy applies to the SMG family of Museums, i.e. The Science Museum, National Railway Museum (NRM), Museum of Science & Industry Manchester (MSI) and National Media Museum (NMeM) and SCMG Enterprises Ltd, plus the support sites of Wroughton and Blythe House. This Policy also applies to SMG colleagues and Volunteers working at Shildon, it does not apply to DCC colleagues.

In this document Colleague refers to all SMG employees, volunteers, freelancers and interns.

The Museum's Asbestos Policy is structured in four sections:

Section one is the SMG Director's Asbestos Policy statement which outline SMG's commitment to providing a successful asbestos management system.

Section two is an introduction and scope of the policy.

Section three designates the organisations requirements to implement the policy.

Section four gives detailed arrangements in place to manage asbestos.

The Museum's Asbestos Policy is subject to a process of continuous review in order to respond to changes in organisational arrangements, state of knowledge in relation to workplace hazards and changing legal requirements.

All current policy information is available through the SMG intranet.

Section One: SMG Director's Policy statement on Asbestos.

1.1 The Science Museum Group (SMG) recognises its responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and will take account of all related Approved Codes of Practice and Guidance.

Specifically, SMG recognises the need to protect its employees and others from the harmful effects of asbestos by:-

- (a) complying with the Regulations;
- (b) providing a range of control documents that stipulate standards not less than those set out in the Approved Codes of Practice;
- (c) taking all reasonable steps to prevent its employees and others from breathing asbestos fibres; and
- (d) providing appropriate training.

SMG acknowledges that the presence of asbestos containing materials (ACMs) does not in itself constitute a danger. However, it is hazardous when disturbed or damaged and must be treated accordingly.

Section Two: Introduction and scope of the policy

2.1 This policy expands on SMG's general Health & Safety Policy. These two policies together, and any supporting information and procedures to support them, comprise SMG's arrangements for Asbestos.

It is assumed asbestos is present in all areas of SMG buildings, building services, showcases, historic objects, tools of trade and auxiliary materials unless a suitable risk assessment or investigation has been carried out to rule out the possibility that asbestos containing materials are present.

All SMG colleagues (including unpaid workers such as volunteers, research associates and interns) and contractors working on SMG sites must comply with the requirements of this Policy and relevant supporting control documents.

Colleagues and contractors not trained to work with asbestos are not expected to work with or be exposed to asbestos on Museum sites.

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No Science Museum Group colleagues are authorised to undertake any notifiable non-licensed work [NNLW].

All colleagues whose normal duties may bring them into contact with existing asbestos containing materials will be trained in asbestos awareness.

Contractors must be made aware of asbestos containing materials which are or may be present in the SMG Estate and historic objects.

All Departments within SMG involved in operations which may require moving, handling or otherwise disturbing asbestos containing materials will be audited to determine compliance with this policy and the relevant control documents.

Section Three: Organisational requirements

3.1 The Director of Masterplan and Estates

The Director of Masterplan and Estates has executive responsibility for the review and implementation of this policy.

3.2 Head of Estates

The Head of Estates has function responsibility and will ensure that:

- Asbestos Management Plans are completed to manage asbestos risk in buildings, building services and showcases.
- Training is provided to members of colleagues appropriate for their role.
- Local rules have been developed for the management of Asbestos in their areas of responsibility.
- Records are maintained detailing the location of any know asbestos.

3.3 Estates Manager

Each individual site has an appointed Estates Manager is responsible for:

- Developing local rules that address specific site conditions.
- Production and maintenance of records that indicate where asbestos is known or suspected to be present, and making those records available to colleagues, contractors and others who may be brought into contact with asbestos as part of their activities;

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3.4 SMG Collections Hazards Management Group.

The SMG Collections Hazards Management Group is responsible for developing and implementing an Asbestos Management Plan for managing asbestos risks in the historic objects owned by the Museum. Collections care, conservation and curatorial managers are responsible for developing local rules that address specific site conditions.

The SMG Collections Hazard Management Group Chair is responsible for the review of the Asbestos Management plan for asbestos in collections.

Where required they will also be responsible for providing appropriate training on the management of Asbestos in collections.

3.5 Line managers

*Owner: Director of Masterplan and Estates
Created: 2010
Reviewed: April 2015*

Individual line managers involved in operations that use auxiliary materials (non-inventoried historic objects, or tools of trade intrinsic to Museum business) must manage the risk through normal risk assessment processes as described by the relevant regulations and codes of practice.

Each of these risk assessments may be supplemented by a method statement that provide specific instruction on how to carry out described tasks safely.

Risk assessments and method statements covering use of auxiliary materials must be reviewed annually by the responsible line manager.

3.6 Health & Safety Advisory Team

The Health & Safety Team will be responsible for ensuring:

- Development of guidelines for activities that may involve significant risk of asbestos exposure through the movement or handling of auxiliary materials.
- Promoting awareness of the hazards of asbestos and the management procedures through information and training;

Section Four: Arrangements

4.1 Planning

Asbestos risk at SMG is managed through Asbestos Management Plans (one for Estates and one for Collections), Local Rules, risk assessments and method statements for activities involving auxiliary materials.

Asbestos Management Plans consist of standard operating procedures for the identification, risk assessment and control of asbestos risks, including incident investigation.

Local Rules provide additional information by way of describing local conditions that impact on compliance with Asbestos Management Plans.

Task or event specific risk assessments are in place to ensure risks arising from auxiliary materials described above are controlled.

4.2 Monitoring and Audit

Line managers are responsible for monitoring the activity of all colleagues under their control (including unpaid workers) to ensure they comply with all the requirements of the relevant control documents.

This on-going monitoring is supplemented by audit activity, undertaken by the Museum's Health & Safety Advisory team, and by other third parties where appropriate.

Where a department employs Contractors they are responsible for ensuring that the Contractors follow the correct procedures when working with asbestos.

4.3 Advice

The Health and Safety Executive is the principal source of guidance in circumstances where compliance with specific regulatory requirements is not practicable or would have an overwhelmingly negative impact on normal SMG operations.

Circumstances that require SMG to undertake activities that are not covered by asbestos legislation may require clarification from HSE on a case by case basis.

When interpretation or clarification of legal requirements is needed, The Museums Health & Safety Advisory team will contact the HSE on SMG's behalf.

Advice regarding practical asbestos management should be sought from the local approved asbestos specialist. Contact the Estates or Collections Asbestos Manager as appropriate.