



Demolition Activities

What to Do If You Are Tearing Down Structures That Contain Vermiculite or Asbestos

Lincoln County Asbestos Resource Program (ARP), Libby and Surrounding Area – 406-291-5335
EPA Information Center, 108 E. 9th St., Libby, Montana 59923 – 406-293-6194

Revised: January 2014

Vermiculite in Libby & Troy



Raw and Popped Ore

For several decades, vermiculite was commonly used in and around homes in Lincoln County for a variety of

applications, including as a soil additive, construction aggregate, and attic insulation.

If vermiculite is present, it might contain Libby Amphibole asbestos (LA). Exposure to LA could lead to serious diseases such as asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. It will take several more years for EPA to complete the cleanup, and workers might encounter vermiculite during that time or even after EPA has finished its work. It is not possible for EPA to remove (or to even know about) *all* the vermiculite in the area. In some cases, vermiculite might be intentionally left in sealed walls, home foundations, and other relatively inaccessible areas. Demolition of any existing structure in the Libby/Troy area might uncover vermiculite either before or after EPA has completed its work.



It is possible that you might unexpectedly find vermiculite after starting your demolition project. EPA strongly cautions you not to disturb

it in any way that might cause LA to become airborne.

Precautionary Steps to Take So You Can Get On With Your Job

Before Demolition:

1. **Contact the Asbestos Resource Program (ARP) for a free assessment of the situation.**
2. Check **local, state and federal regulations** regarding demolition of buildings.
3. Check with the local landfill to learn if inspection of your debris is required.

During Demolition:

1. **Use water to moisten the area being demolished to minimize dust generation.** There should be no offsite migration of dust during demolition activities.
2. **Stop work to assess the volume** of vermiculite. Call the ERS immediately if something unusual is encountered.
3. **Use point-of-cut ventilation techniques** when pulling, cutting or accessing behind boards or wall coverings, use a HEPA vacuum at the point of access or disturbance to minimize dust migration and lessen potential exposure.
4. **For a small quantity** of vermiculite, such as a very isolated area or a few random flakes, EPA recommends you wet and place it in a sealable plastic bag (remember to rinse any tools used to transfer vermiculite) and put the bag in the trash.

After Demolition:

1. **Keep larger quantities of vermiculite wet** – vermiculite that was used as fill around pipes, in walls, as bulk fill, etc.
2. Keep all debris wet and covered with a tarp during transportation.
3. Dispose of debris according to local, state and federal laws.

Libby Amphibole asbestos (LA) should be avoided or handled with extreme care. Exposure to LA has resulted in disease in workers and non-workers who have had contact with contaminated materials. Take care not to bring any contaminated clothing or material back to your

home or business. Treat any asbestos containing material as regulated material and comply with all state and local regulations. There is no known threshold risk level for asbestos-related materials, and any exposure will increase the risk of asbestos-related disease. The health risk from exposure to **all** asbestos depends greatly on the amount of asbestos in the material you are disturbing and how long the exposure lasts. If you take the basic precautions outlined in this fact sheet, your project will be completed with minimal exposure to LA.

Un-exfoliated



Exfoliated



Common dust or surgical masks are not effective against asbestos fibers! Wearing a respirator with a HEPA filter is the best way to avoid breathing asbestos fibers. However, they must be used properly or exposure may still occur. For information on respirator requirements, visit OSHA's website: www.osha.gov/SLTC/respiratoryprotection.



Who Can I Contact With Questions About Asbestos?

EPA Information Center: 406-293-6194
ARP for the Libby area: 406-291-5335

EPA, the ARP or DEQ may send personnel out to inspect a situation involving vermiculite or LA. They might advise the owner to allow EPA or a licensed asbestos contractor or inspector to take samples, conduct cleanup or take other special measures to reduce the risk of asbestos exposure. A list of licensed inspectors and contractors can be found at the EPA Information Center.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality,
Asbestos Control Program: 406-444-5300

Montana law requires that employers hire a licensed inspector to determine if asbestos is present before doing any work. Asbestos that is not associated with the Libby vermiculite mine is still regulated by Montana DEQ. If non-Libby asbestos is found, it should be dealt with according to Montana regulations. Visit Montana DEQ's Asbestos website at: www.deq.mt.gov/Asbestos

Please learn about the risks of asbestos exposure and basic precautions by reviewing the fact sheets available at the **EPA Information Center** or the website listed below:

- **HEPA Vacuum Cleaner Program** – Revised January 2014. Provides information on the effectiveness of HEPA vacuums and describes their role in Libby's cleanup.
- **Lincoln County Do-It-Yourselfers** – Revised January 2014
- **Contractors & Tradesmen Working Indoors** – Revised January 2014
- **Contractors & Tradesmen Working Outdoors** – Revised January 2014
- **Libby and Troy Residents: Vermiculite or Asbestos In or Around Your Home or Business** – Revised January 2014
- **Yard Work and Gardening Activities** – Revised January 2014
- **Explore the EPA website and its links at: www2.epa.gov/region8/libby-asbestos**