

Reducing Asbestos Exposure

What To Do If You Are Excavating, Trenching or Demolishing and Encounter Materials That Contain Vermiculite or Libby Amphibole Asbestos

Libby Amphibole Asbestos

Libby Amphibole asbestos (LA) is a naturally occurring mineral but should be handled with extreme care. Exposure to LA can lead to serious asbestos-related diseases, such as asbestosis, lung cancer or mesothelioma. The health risk from exposure to all asbestos depends greatly on the amount of asbestos in the material you are disturbing and length of time that exposure lasts; therefore, precautions should be exercised to limit asbestos exposures.

Vermiculite in Libby & Troy

Vermiculite was mined in Libby, MT and was commonly used in and around homes in Lincoln County for a variety of reasons, including as a soil additive, construction aggregate and attic insulation. If vermiculite is present, it may be contaminated with Libby Amphibole asbestos.

Identification

Un-exfoliated



Exfoliated



The photo on the left is an example of raw vermiculite in soils. When heated, vermiculite exfoliates (or pops), forming a lightweight material that was most commonly used for attic/wall insulation, and as a soil additive as shown in the photo on the right.

Beware of Libby Amphibole Asbestos

You may come into contact with LA asbestos on your property even if the EPA has investigated the property or completed a removal. The disturbance of vermiculite that is contaminated with asbestos may cause the LA to become airborne. Cover or wet the vermiculite and call the ARP Hotline. The ARP will help determine if LA asbestos remains on your property.



Libby Amphibole asbestos with vermiculite ore in raw form (L) and asbestos fibers (magnified) (R)

Use Best Management Practices

ARP suggests the following precautionary steps to take to minimize exposure to Libby Amphibole Asbestos: **REGULAR DUST MASKS ARE NOT EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING EXPOSURE TO LA.**

- Contact Montana811.org for locate request
- or Submit PEN request at lcarp.org

Excavating, Trenching or Demolishing:

1. Use water for dust suppression to avoid potential LA fibers from becoming airborne.
2. Rinse off any tools or equipment within your work area before moving the tools or equipment to another location.
3. Do not migrate soils from one work area to another. This may result in cross-contamination. If soil spoils must be removed from the work area(s), please contact ARP.
4. For small scale LA asbestos removals, Contact ARP for asbestos bags or poly to cover contaminated LA asbestos materials for transport to the LC Landfill.
5. Wearing a respirator mask with P-100 fine particulate HEPA filter is the best way to avoid breathing asbestos fibers. However, they must be used properly or exposure may still occur.
6. If ARP has given instructions that materials from contaminated areas be disposed of at the landfill, please contact the LC Landfill prior to transport at (406)293-7146.



Lincoln County Asbestos Resource Program (ARP)

HOTLINE (406) 291-5335

For more information visit: lcarp.org

Libby Asbestos is Toxic

It should be avoided or handled with extreme care. Exposure to Libby Amphibole asbestos 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. 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. **There is no known threshold risk level for asbestos-related materials, and any exposure will increase the risk of asbestos-related disease.**

If you take the basic precautions outlined in this fact sheet, your risk from exposure will be less.

Common dust or surgical masks are not effective against asbestos fibers!



Wearing a respirator mask with a P-100 fine particulate HEPA filter is the best way to avoid breathing asbestos fibers. However, they must be used properly or exposure may still occur.

For more information on respirator requirements, visit OSHA's website: www.osha.gov/respiratory-protection

Learn about the risks of asbestos exposure and basic precautions by reviewing the Best Management Practices (BMP) resource fact sheets available at the **Lincoln County Asbestos Resource Program** or on the website: **lcarp.org**

- **Reducing Asbestos Exposure** – *How to reduce exposure to asbestos when renovating or excavating*
- **Lincoln County Do-It-Yourselfers** – *What to do if you find vermiculite or asbestos*
- **Contractors & Tradesmen Working Outdoors** – *What to do if you find vermiculite or asbestos*
- **Demolition Activities** – *Precautionary steps to take before tearing down structures*
- **Libby and Troy Residents** – *Vermiculite or Asbestos in or around your home or business*
- **Contractors & Tradesmen Working Indoors** – *What to do if you find vermiculite or asbestos*
- **13 Simple Steps to Protect from Libby Asbestos** – *How to reduce exposure to asbestos*

Who Can I Contact With Questions About Asbestos?



**ARP
HOTLINE
(406) 291-5335**



**Montana
Asbestos Control
Program
(406) 444-5300**

The DEQ or ARP might send personnel out to inspect a situation involving vermiculite or LA. That guidance might include advising the owner to allow 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 contractors and inspectors can be provided by contacting DEQ or ARP.

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 the Montana DEQ. If non-Libby asbestos is found, it should be dealt with according to Montana regulations. Explore Montana DEQ's Asbestos web site at: www.deq.mt.gov/Asbestos