



Understanding Asbestos Surveys

If you are a property owner or property manager you should be aware of your legal duties regarding asbestos management and the need for assessing the risks from any asbestos containing materials in a building. Risk assessment usually takes the form of an asbestos survey, followed by the creation of a register and a management plan, as required by Regulation 4 of The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (CAR 2012).

What type of Asbestos Survey is required?

Before deciding on the type of survey, the client needs to be aware that the survey must provide sufficient information for: an asbestos register and plan to be prepared, a suitable risk assessment to be carried out and a written plan to manage the risks to be produced.

Also, it is highly recommended that the client (the customer) agrees with the surveyor, before the survey is commissioned, what format the survey report should take, agree on any caveats and areas not to be surveyed.

There are three types of asbestos surveys, each covering different aspects of asbestos management:

- ▶ **Management Survey**
- ▶ **Refurbishment Survey**
- ▶ **Demolition Survey**

Management Survey

The purpose of a management survey, known as the 'standard' survey, is to locate, as far as reasonably practicable, the presence and extent of any suspected asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in the building which could be damaged or disturbed during normal occupancy, including foreseeable maintenance and installation, and to assess their condition.

Refurbishment Survey

If it is possible that the fabric of the building will be disturbed during refurbishment works then the building requires a refurbishment survey. The survey should locate, as far as reasonably practicable, the presence and extent of any suspected ACMs in the areas that are to be refurbished. Therefore, the refurbishment job specification should be provided so that all the areas likely to be disturbed are surveyed prior to the work starting.

Demolition Survey

If a building or part of a building is to be demolished, a demolition survey is required, so that all ACMs can be identified and then removed, prior to the demolition taking place. Demolition surveys are the most intrusive and licensed asbestos removal may have to take place to access all areas for surveying purposes.

Choosing a Surveyor

Surveys can be carried out by in-house personnel or a third party. However, the surveyor must be competent to carry out the work required, and it is the duty holders' responsibility (as stated in the 'Asbestos: The survey guide' HSG264) to ensure the surveyor is competent to carry out the type of survey required.

To be competent the HSG264 states that the surveyor must:

- ▶ *have sufficient training, qualifications, knowledge, experience and ability to carry out their duties in relation to the survey and to recognise their limitations*
- ▶ *have sufficient knowledge of the specific tasks to be undertaken and the risks which the work will entail*
- ▶ *be able to demonstrate independence, impartiality and integrity*
- ▶ *have an adequate quality management system*
- ▶ *carry out the survey in accordance with recommended guidance*

When choosing a third party, clients should note that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) do recommend United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accreditation for surveying organisations, although this is not a legal requirement. Also, accreditation for individual surveyors is not available.

Survey Report – what should a client receive?

A client should receive a comprehensible and usable report, that is, the information in the survey report should be easy for the client to extract and to use to prepare an asbestos register, e.g. by presenting the results in a manner or format that can be directly lifted or employed to form the asbestos register.

It's important to note that reports should contain the results of sample analysis.

A report, for any type of survey should contain the following sections:

- ▶ *executive summary*
- ▶ *introduction covering the scope of work*
- ▶ *general site and survey information*
- ▶ *survey results (including material assessment results)*
- ▶ *conclusions and actions*
- ▶ *bulk analysis results*

A report should be completed in a written format and supplied either as a hard copy or as an electronic document, or both.

Also, once a survey is completed the surveyor should return and meet the client to discuss the findings and to explain how the survey report should be used.

For the client a survey report forms part of their overall management plan and should be able to fulfil the requirements of an asbestos register.

All ATaC members are UKAS accredited surveying organisations and are located throughout the UK – to find one near you please visit www.atac.org.uk