

Medical Device/Equipment ALERT

Ref. MDEA(NI)2004/42

Issued: 10 August 2004

For:

IMMEDIATE ACTION	
ACTION	✓
UPDATE	
INFORMATION REQUEST	



**NORTHERN
IRELAND
ADVERSE
INCIDENT
CENTRE**

	Section
Medical Device/Equipment: Fire Doors: Risk of exposure to asbestos when carrying out works	▶ ①
Problem: Older doors may contain asbestos, or have asbestos panels, fibres may be released during repair or modification work. This notice provides guidance.	▶ ②
Action by: All appropriate managers and staff.	▶ ③
Action: Fire doors which possibly contain asbestos containing material (ACM) should be identified during your assessment in accordance with the new duty to manage asbestos that was introduced in the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003). If found to contain ACM or suspected to contain ACM, record in the Asbestos Register as required by the Regulations and risk assess any work that requires to undertaken on these fire doors.	▶ ④
Distributed by NIAIC to: Chief Executive of each HSS Board Chief Executive of each HSS Trust Chief Executive of each Agency NIAIC Liaison Officers	▶ ⑤
Contacts NIAIC contacts for technical aspects	▶ ⑥
Feedback Requirements to NIAIC None	▶ ⑦

This Alert is on our web site: <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niaic>

1. DEVICE/EQUIPMENT:

Fire Doors: Risk of exposure to asbestos when carrying out works

2. PROBLEM:

In the past, asbestos containing materials (ACM) were commonly used in the construction of fire doors to provide the required degree of fire resistance. Some fire doors also had asbestos panels attached to them for this purpose. Asbestos fibres may be released if any work such as fitting signs, new handles or locks is carried out on these doors. The ACM can be in various forms such as 'millboard' or Asbestos Insulating Board (AIB). AIB can be part of laminated or composite products, thus making identification more difficult. Occasionally, loose asbestos insulation can also be found within a fire door.

ACM may not be identifiable from an external examination of the door, e.g. if the ACM are part of the core of the door, or within a laminated product.

It is difficult to determine a specific time when ACM usage ceased in the construction of fire doors. However, it is thought that millboard ended around 1965 and AIB production ended around 1980. The Asbestos (Prohibitions) Regulations 1992 banned the use of amosite (brown asbestos) and crocidolite (blue asbestos) in products (except where products were already in use prior to 1 January 1986). The use of chrysotile (white asbestos) was banned from 1999.

3. ACTION BY:

All appropriate managers and staff.

4. ACTION:

Fire doors which possibly contain ACMs should be identified, taking into account the Asbestos (Prohibitions) Regulations 1992. These doors should then be assessed and, if found to contain ACM, recorded in the Asbestos Register as required by the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland), 2003.

Where there is doubt about the age and construction of a door, it should be assumed that ACM are present, even when it is known that similar doors do not have ACM.

A risk assessment should be carried out before any work is done on fire doors known to contain or suspected of containing asbestos.

During any work, precautions should be taken to avoid exposure; in particular the inhalation of asbestos fibres.

It is recommended that emergency procedures are clearly defined and outlined to staff for implementations, following a suspected release of asbestos fibres, in order that exposure to fibres can be minimised.

5. ONWARD DISTRIBUTION TO:

Please bring this notice to the attention of all who need to know or be aware of it. This will include distribution to:

- Health & Safety Officers/Advisors
- Fire Officers
- Independent Health and Social Care Providers – Private Clinics, Residential and Nursing Homes through HSS Board R&I Units

6. CONTACTS:

Enquires to NIAIC should quote reference number MDEA(NI)2004/42 and be addressed to:
Northern Ireland Adverse Incident Centre (NIAIC)

Health Estates
Estate Policy Directorate
Stoney Road
Dundonald
Belfast BT16 1US

Tel: 028 9052 3868

Fax: 028 9052 3900

Email: NIAIC@dhsspsni.gov.uk

7. FEEDBACK:

None



Brian Godfrey
NIAIC Manager

HOW TO REPORT ADVERSE INCIDENTS

Adverse Incidents relating to medical devices, non-medical equipment, plant and buildings should be reported to NIAIC as soon as possible. Advice on how to report is given in MDEA(NI)2004/01. If you are in doubt about how to report incidents, please speak to your liaison officer or contact NIAIC using the telephone number provided. Adverse Incident reporting forms and an on-line reporting facility are available on the NIAIC website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niaic

Heath Estates is an Executive Agency of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety