

# Condominium Home Owners' Association

*Serving BC's Strata Property Owners since 1976*

Bulletin: 300-271

## Condo Smarts

Headline: Asbestos

Topic: Asbestos

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**Dear Condo Smarts:** Our strata recently experienced a serious water leak damaging several floors in our building. Our insurer and restoration company did a great job.

However, we have a problem resulting from the repairs. The restoration company have advised that asbestos has been discovered in the "mud" used to finish the drywall. We have been unable to confirm the claim with a written report and there is no record of testing of the materials. The restoration company have refused to provide copies of the testing procedures and results. So now what do we do for disclosure? We cannot obtain any proof of the asbestos, owners are aware of the information and buyers are asking questions. How can the strata or owners disclose a potentially hazardous condition in the building with no proof? Wendy C., North Vancouver

**Dear Wendy:** Industry generally stopped using asbestos in drywall mud around 1985. The problem with the asbestos is that it is a low risk in its inert state in the mud, but once the walls are saturated or construction disrupts the surface through renovations or demolition the problems begin. The asbestos can become airborne resulting in a risk to the contractors on site and the residents in the building. A contractor has a duty to inspect and test for asbestos if the conditions are right. If asbestos is discovered they are

required by law to comply with the WorkSafe (WCB) regulations for the protection of their crew. But how does the strata corporation find out what's going on? Reputable contractors and restoration companies willingly provide copies of all testing, identify who conducts the testing, and testing protocols. Both the strata corporation and the insurer are the clients and they are entitled to all of the information. Once you obtain this information it will be incumbent on the strata corporation to report it to the owners and subsequently to potential purchasers on request. Here are some questions that a strata corporation should ask the contractor or testing authority. What is the concentration of asbestos in our building materials? Does the asbestos pose a health threat to our residents if it's undisturbed? Are there special precautions we should take during construction or renovations? Are there additional steps that our strata corporation has to undertake to comply with WorkSafe standards and regulations? If the contractor refuses to cooperate you may want to contact an independent testing facility to verify the claim. For more information on Asbestos go to the WorkSafe web site at: [www.WorksafeBC.com](http://www.WorksafeBC.com) and enter Asbestos into the search window at the top of the home page.

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