



DOUNREAY SHE ALERT

GREEN ALERT (Good Practice Advice or Lessons To Be Learned)

Ref: 12_02_A(D)

Date: 24 January 2012

Issue No: 1

POTENTIAL ASBESTOS EXPOSURE DUE TO NOTICE BOARD REMOVAL

What Happened

An office block was being demolished on the Dounreay site. Operatives were stripping out the office furnishings eg, vinyl flooring, carpets, blinds etc. During strip out operations a notice board was found to be difficult to remove. The screws holding the board could not be released using a screwdriver so the decommissioning operator removed the board using a hammer.

On the Saturday a Supervisor was passing outside the area and due to his previous experience as an Asbestos Operative, noted a breach of the asbestos wall. He immediately took the necessary action to have the area isolated and the relevant parties informed. The Supervisor should be commended for his vigilance and prompt action.



The area is to be cleaned by a Licensed Contractor before work recommences. Examination of the Regulations has also determined that the incident is not RIDDOR reportable.

Why It Happened

An asbestos Demolition Survey had been completed and a number of Asbestos Insulating Board (AIB) walls had been identified and labelled accordingly.

The method statement for the task stated that the Notice Boards were to be removed. The MS also stated that "asbestos surveys were completed in each of the offices and confirm that there are no asbestos issues associated with this work". The MS was therefore inadequate for the task as it did not identify the asbestos hazards that were present.

A walkround was conducted by the Project Engineer, Facility Supervisor and Operative to discuss the work package. Areas where asbestos had been identified or presumed were discussed. However, neither the Facility Supervisor nor the Operative recalls any specific mention that the notice board, attached to an AIB wall, should not be removed. Therefore, it can be concluded that the verbal discussion was an inadequate control measure.

An asbestos warning label was on the wall but the Operator did not apply the START principle and continued with removal of the notice board even though it was obvious an asbestos hazard existed.

Lessons to be Learned

- Method Statements and Pre-job Briefs must adequately identify the hazards present and clearly identify the work which is to be completed and that which is not to be completed.
- Operatives must never disregard asbestos warning signs and undertake work which will damage or disturb asbestos containing materials.
- Operatives must apply the START principle when faced with a situation that introduces new hazards which have not been identified.
- Operatives who are likely to come across asbestos during their working activities should attend the DSRL Asbestos Awareness training and relevant refresher.