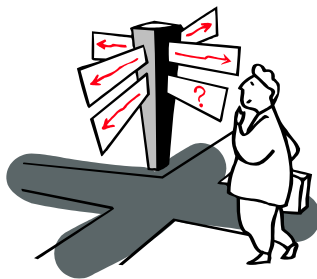
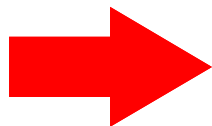


**Where can I
get more
information
and help?**



The Operating Engineers National Hazmat Program has been training Operating Engineers in hazardous waste operations and emergency response (HAZWOPER) for 13 years.

Contact information:



**Operating Engineers National
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**Emergency Response Hotline:
(888) 877-6974**

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Operating Engineers National Hazmat Program



Frank Hanley, General President

Protect Yourself While Helping Others

**Dealing with Asbestos
in the New York Cleanup**

What do we know about asbestos in the World Trade Center cleanup?

The EPA has confirmed that there **is** asbestos in the dust and debris that is now being cleaned up in Manhattan after the despicable attack by terrorists. One dust sample had an asbestos concentration of about 4.5%. Asbestos is a mineral that was widely used in sprayed fireproofing and pipe insulation. ABC News has reported that asbestos fireproofing in the Trade Center was not removed but encapsulated. Typically, asbestos appears as a whitish, fibrous material; however, given the enormous destruction at the World Trade Center, it may be impossible to tell which debris contains asbestos. Also, airborne fibers that can cause health damage are too small



What are the dangers of asbestos exposure?

Asbestos is a well known cause of several health problems. Exposure to airborne asbestos can cause asbestosis, a scarring of the lungs; mesothelioma, a cancer affecting the membranes lining the lungs and abdomen; and lung cancer. Fortunately, asbestos only poses a serious risk when the fibers are inhaled, generally over a long period of time.

How real are those dangers for Operating Engineers?

The EPA has reported airborne asbestos results in NY that are all below the current OSHA standard, although asbestos fibers were detected in some samples. For comparison, the concentrations found in historical workplaces that produced disease were usually hundreds of times greater than the current OSHA standard.

Do I need to take precautions?

Yes! Not enough air samples have been taken to say anything definite about the possible exposures. Also, some debris may have much more asbestos in it than others. Finally, the direction and strength of the wind is important.

What should I do to protect myself?

Protect your lungs by wearing a respirator. Many rescue personnel have been wearing paper respirators. No paper respirators are approved for use with asbestos. Respirators with one strap are not acceptable either. Permanent, half-face respirators with disposable cartridges are acceptable, if NIOSH-approved. The cartridges must be marked as P100 to assure adequate protection.

Wearing a disposable suit over your clothes will prevent taking the asbestos-containing dust home. Tyvek® is the most widely used material for suits in the asbestos abatement industry. In this present situation, Tyvek® suits without booties should be worn.

