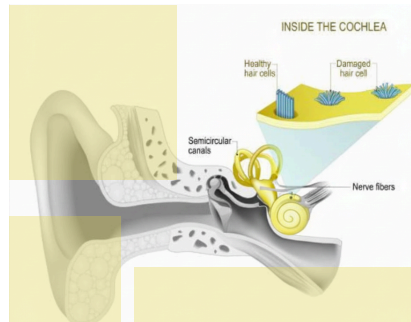


Tinnitus

For many people living with tinnitus, the workplace can feel mentally exhausting. The constant ringing in the ears often heightens stress and anxiety, making it difficult to stay focused, productive and composed throughout the day.

Two forms are relevant in occupational settings: temporary tinnitus follows short-term noise exposure and usually resolves within hours or days. When symptoms last longer than three months it is classified as chronic tinnitus, indicating permanent changes in the cochlea.



Common symptoms of work-related tinnitus include:

- ◆ Ringing or buzzing in the ears
- ◆ Difficulty hearing clearly
- ◆ Headaches
- ◆ Dizziness
- ◆ Vertigo
- ◆ Difficulty falling or staying asleep

Tinnitus affects performance in three main ways: increased cognitive load (the brain uses extra effort to manage the sound), disrupted attention (it competes with other auditory tasks), and poor sleep (it becomes more noticeable in quiet settings, often causing insomnia). In high-focus roles, such as operating machinery, monitoring equipment or communicating in safety-critical environments, these effects can raise error rates and increase the risk of accidents.

Preventing Work-Related Tinnitus

Reducing exposure to loud noise is key to preventing work-related tinnitus. Although tinnitus can have various causes, workplace-related cases are most often linked to excessive noise levels. Two main factors influence the risk: how loud the noise is and how long a person is exposed to it. Higher noise levels and longer exposure times both increase the likelihood of developing tinnitus.

TIPS TO LOWER THE RISK:



Try to limit the amount of time spent in noisy environments. If your job requires you to work in such conditions, take regular breaks in quieter areas to give your ears time to recover.

Using appropriate hearing protection is also essential. This includes earplugs and earmuffs. Earplugs are small, soft inserts placed in the ear canal, while earmuffs cover the ears entirely like headphones. Both types help reduce the amount of sound reaching the eardrums, thereby protecting your hearing.

Employees with tinnitus may find the workplace challenging due to:

- **Background Noise** – busy office layouts, noisy equipment, or constant conversations can make symptoms more intense;
- **Communication Difficulties** – hearing clearly can be challenging, particularly during phone conversations or group discussions;
- **Stress & Fatigue** – symptoms often become more severe with stress, and demanding work settings can increase strain and tiredness;
- **Lack of Awareness** – limited understanding of tinnitus among managers may result in insufficient support or accommodations.

Although tinnitus has no cure, strategies to help individuals manage the condition include the use of hearing aids, as the amplified external sounds help reduce the perception of ringing or hissing. In addition, background noise (such as a fan or a white-noise machine) may offer some relief to people who struggle to fall asleep due to tinnitus.



www.safetech.co.za

Southern Office

PO Box 27607
Greenacres
Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth)
6057

Tel: +27 (0)41 365 6846
info@safetech.co.za

Northern Office

PO Box 80171
Doornpoort
Pretoria
0017

Tel: +27 (0)82 4111 571
sonja.pedro@safetech.co.za



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- ✓ Identification
- ✓ Risk Assessment
- ✓ Inventory
- ✓ Management Plan
- ✓ Bulk Sampling



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CONTACT US TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES FOR YOUR BUSINESS:

- Occupational Hygiene Surveys
- EHS Risk Assessments
- Ergonomics Risk Assessments
- EHS Management System Development and Implementation
- Environmental Monitoring
- Identification of EHS Legal Requirements and Compliance Audits
- Internal Auditor Training
- Specialised EHS Training

ASBESTOS SAFETY in the workplace



Both long-term and repeated short-term work with asbestos raises the likelihood of developing asbestos-related diseases.

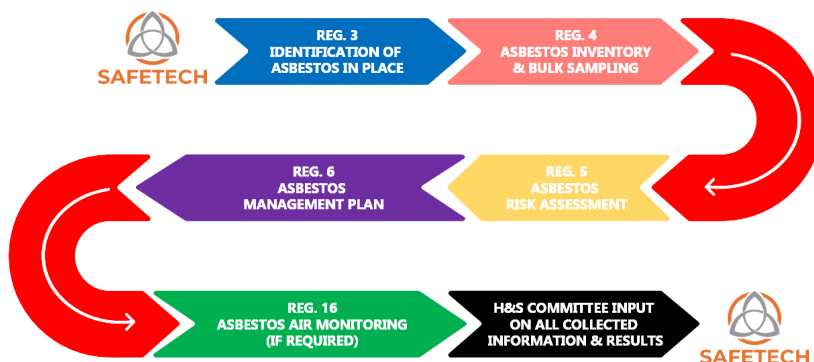
Asbestos exposure in the workplace can lead to serious health issues. Prolonged contact with this hazardous mineral is linked to diseases such as lung cancer, mesothelioma and other health conditions.

It is therefore essential to follow proper safety precautions when working with asbestos. Asbestos removal is strictly regulated by the Asbestos Abatement Regulations 2020 and closely monitored by the Department of Employment and Labour in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act 85 of 1993).

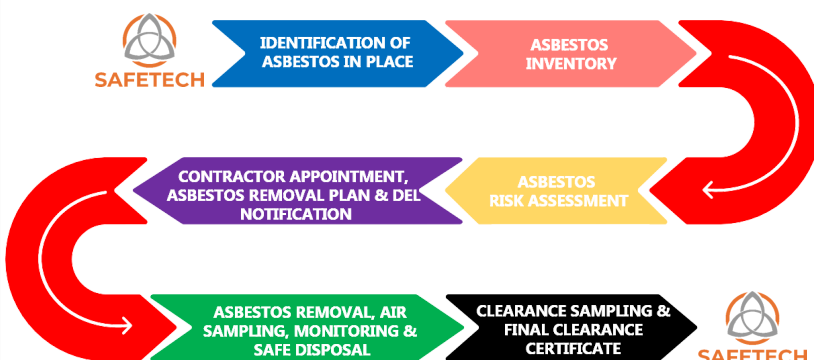
Must all asbestos be replaced?

An inventory and risk assessment needs to be done to determine the condition of the asbestos and whether it needs to be replaced. Should a building contain asbestos that is still in good condition, an assessment would need to be carried out by a competent person every 24 months.

Compliance Roadmap Non-Removal



Compliance Roadmap Removal



The Asbestos Abatement Regulations 2020 provides guidelines for the identification of asbestos and plans for its removal, including the use of registered asbestos contractors. The regulations state that buildings that contain asbestos as part of their construction (such as roofing; or in substructures such as water tanks, gutters, and downpipes) had to have a competent person assess the asbestos, draft an asbestos inventory and have an asbestos management plan detailing and quantifying the removal of damaged asbestos. An Asbestos Phase-Out Plan must also be developed.



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