

Facts about Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA) in North Carolina



What is naturally occurring asbestos (NOA)?

Naturally occurring asbestos is the name for a group of fibrous minerals that occur naturally in soil and ultramafic rock formations.

Is NOA present in North Carolina?

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has currently identified NOA locations in the western part of the state. Although there are no current active asbestos mines in North Carolina today, there are other active sites that mine other minerals which could contain asbestos. These areas are identified as either a mine, a potential mine, or naturally exposed rock formations.

How can naturally occurring asbestos affect my health?

Exposure to asbestos can cause some types of lung cancer as well as mesothelioma (cancer of the tissue covering the internal organs). Asbestos enters your body by breathing in asbestos fibers. Once asbestos fibers are caught in the lungs, they remain there permanently.

If naturally occurring asbestos is not disturbed and fibers are not released into the air, then it is not a health risk.

What are some ways in which I might disturb naturally occurring asbestos material?

- Leaf blowing in areas where bare soil is known to contain NOA.
- Hammering, chiseling, and sifting while gem hunting in areas known to contain NOA.
- Using machinery to plow or plant large tracts of land with NOA in the soil.

- Drilling into asbestos rock formations with heavy equipment.
- Grading, landscaping or excavating soil containing NOA.
- Removing known NOA material and transporting the material to other locations.

What are some steps I can take to prevent exposure to naturally occurring asbestos?

- Leave NOA in place and undisturbed.
- Limit dust generating activities by wetting the area with water prior to and during the activity.
- Cover or cap NOA material with three to six inches of soil that contains less than 0.25 percent asbestos (Note: other materials may be also substituted in place of soil).
- Maintain the area covered with plants to prevent erosion.

How can I determine if naturally occurring asbestos is in my area?

- Link to naturally occurring asbestos sites in North Carolina
<http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/oeo/nea/sites.html>
- Consider contacting a licensed professional geologist in your area at
<http://www.ncblg.org/IndivLicensees.cfm>.

Information for Contractors:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/asb/

www.arb.ca.gov/cap/handbooks/asbestosnoafinal.pdf

Information for the General Public:

<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/noa/basicinfo.html>

<http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/clean.html>

For more information:

Contact the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Public Health, Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology at 919-707-5900.



State of North Carolina, Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health
Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch
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