Compliance Review

eSafetyFirst Canada

Online Asbestos Awareness Course

The purpose of this document is to provide a compliance review for the eSafetyFirst Canada (eSafetyFirst) online Asbestos Awareness course. The course was viewed in its entirety and the assessment quizzes taken. A slide-by-slide review of both modules conducted to determine both compliance and alignment with OHS Legislation and adherence to established standards.

All jurisdictions in Canada require workers that are going to be involved in abatement, especially in an enclosed or restricted space to take some sort of training that will involve a blend of classroom theory and practical assessment. eSafetyFirst is very clear that workers involved in abatement will have to take additional training. It is made clear on their website prior to purchasing the training:

If the job involves working directly with asbestos, for example, asbestos removal, this theoretical training and evaluation program will not suit you. In such cases, you will need Asbestos Abatement training, a classroom training program our company does not provide.

The eSafetyFirst course provides comprehensive guide regarding asbestos awareness and asbestos awareness training, it can be found here, https://esafetyfirst.com/blog/asbestos-awareness-in-canada-a-comprehensive-guide/. The course and the supplementary material provide the learner with the information necessary to work safely in areas where the building materials may contain asbestos. The course confirms theory component understanding using quizzes.

To evaluate an online Asbestos Awareness Training course that meets Canadian provincial OHS standards and federal regulations (like the Canada Labour Code, Part II), the course must achieve specific, foundational learning outcomes. Because this is an awareness course and not an abatement course, the focus should be entirely on recognition, avoidance, and compliance—not handling. **See notations in each section for required revisions and the section titled Suggestions for improvement for suggested revision.**

Sections or modules that have been corrected will be noted in **RED BOLD** print

To meet compliance requirements, the course needs to include.

1. Regulatory Compliance & Legal Framework

Workers must understand the legal context governing asbestos in their specific jurisdiction.

- **Federal Jurisdiction (CLC Part II):** Identify responsibilities under the *Canada Labour Code, Part II* and the *Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* (COHSR), specifically regarding the control of hazardous substances.
- **Provincial OHS Legislation:** Navigate and locate applicable provincial OHS acts and regulations (e.g., Ontario's O. Reg. 278/05, Alberta's OHS Code Part 4, or WorkSafeBC Part 6) relevant to the worker's location.
- **Internal Responsibility System (IRS):** Define the legal duties of employers, supervisors, and workers regarding asbestos exposure and reporting.

The blog article discusses much of this in length and it is also covered in Module 1 but more extensively in the blog article. The blog article directs readers to the different pieces of governing legislation as well as federal and provincial OHS legislation around asbestos and asbestos containing materials (ACMs). **It would be beneficial if one of the course slides would direct learners to the blog article for reinforcement. This would provide a bit more personalization to the course. Workers should be able to understand where their OHS legislation governing asbestos is located.** See the suggestions for improvement section for more information.

2. Asbestos Identification & Properties

Workers must know what asbestos is, why it was used, and where it is commonly found.

- **Characteristics:** Understand what asbestos is (a group of naturally occurring fibrous minerals) and its common types (e.g., chrysotile, amosite, crocidolite).
- **Historical and Common Uses:** Identify buildings, eras (typically pre-1990s, though present later), and specific materials likely to contain asbestos.
- **Distinguishing ACMs:** Differentiate between **Friable** (easily crumbled by hand) and **Non-Friable** Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACMs).

Module 1 provides a good overview of the different uses of asbestos in Canada and where workers might encounter ACMs. The module discusses how the different types of asbestos are used in different applications such as serpentine is used in brake linings.

It needs to be noted that the course mentions the terms friable and non-friable throughout but there is no definition so learners would understand the meaning of friable. **It is suggested that a list of definitions and include seldom used terms like friable, bulk-sampling, and carcinogenic.**

3. Health Hazards & Risks

Workers must understand *why* asbestos is dangerous to ensure they take avoidance protocols seriously.

- **Mechanisms of Exposure:** Explain how asbestos fibers become airborne and enter the respiratory system.
- **Associated Diseases:** Define and understand the risks of **Asbestosis**, **Mesothelioma**, and **Lung Cancer**.
- **Latency Period:** Understand that asbestos-related diseases have a long latency period (often 15 to 40+ years) between exposure and the onset of symptoms.
- **Synergistic Effects:** Recognize how secondary factors, particularly smoking, exponentially increase the risk of developing lung cancer when combined with asbestos exposure.

Module 1 covers this very well. No required changes.

4. Hazard Recognition & Avoidance Protocols

This is the core operational outcome: knowing how to work safely *around* it without disturbing it.

- **Disturbance Prevention:** Define what constitutes a "disturbance" (e.g., drilling, sanding, sawing, breaking) and how to avoid it.
- **Visual Inspection Limits:** Understand that asbestos cannot be definitively identified by sight alone and requires laboratory bulk sampling.

  Module 2 covers a lot of information on bulk sampling but it does not cover anything on accidental disturbance or hazardous materials assessment prior to renovations on buildings older than 1990.

  ~~**The course should add a slide or two discussing how workers performing repairs or renovations on older buildings should not disturb building components until bulk sampling and lab assessment has been performed. This is covered under most OHS legislation in Canada.**~~ **A correction slide has been added to address this.**

- **Risk Assessment:** Identify the presence of an Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) or Asbestos Inventory Log for the workplace before starting work.
- **Emergency Response / Suspected Release:** Outlining clear steps to take if an uncontrolled release of asbestos is suspected.

Module 2 covers emergency procedure very well providing some very in-depth information regarding, evacuation, injuries, and medical emergencies but it does not cover dealing with

breaks in containment or possible uncontrolled release. ~~**It would be beneficial for the course to cover this**. A simple slide outlining simple procedures would be beneficial:~~

~~1. Stop work immediately.~~

~~2. Evacuate the immediate area.~~

~~3. Isolate the area (close doors/post warning signs).~~

~~4. Report the incident to a supervisor or OHS representative and the local OHS Authority.~~

A slide has been added, this is corrected.

5. Scope of Training Boundaries (The "Stop" Sign)

The course must explicitly draw the line between awareness and active handling.

- **Awareness vs. Abatement:** Explicitly state that this training **does not** qualify the worker to perform any type of asbestos abatement, removal, encapsulation, or sampling.

The course does this in several places.

- **Classification of Work:** Understand the difference between low, moderate, and high-risk asbestos operations as defined by OHS regulations, and recognize that awareness training only permits presence near low-risk or undisturbed environments.

The course covers the classification of work in-depth in Module 1 and the supplementary blog.

~~**The digital certificate needs to be edited. It should clearly state the scope: *"Asbestos Awareness - Non-Abatement."***~~

~~**Unsure if this has been addressed.**~~

Suggestions for improvement:

~~**A definitions section** should be created for this course. There are so many seldom used terms that learners would find it beneficial. Some might require a brief explanation such as Notice of Project (NOP) –~~ **This has been addressed and corrected.**

~~**Module 1** covers asbestosis and lung cancer but nothing specifically on mesothelioma. It would be beneficial to add a slide on mesothelioma. It's effects are also delayed~~. **The slide has been added so this correction is in place.**

~~**Module 1 Slides 7, 10, 17, Module 2 Slide 14** – Shows an image of worker possibly removing older pink fiberglass insulation. Asbestos containing insulation does not look like this. It is suggested that this slide be changed to show some spray on or spray in asbestos insulation. It was usually grey in colour and resembles chunks of torn cotton.~~ **New images have been added to correct this.**

Module 1 Slide 25 – Mentions glove bagging, it would be beneficial to have an image of a glove bag and accompany term in the definitions section**. This has not been addressed. The image is unclear and does not really portray glove bagging. Glove bagging involves encasing a pipe or other structure in a bag that actually has gloves integrated into the bag so the worker and environment are adequately protected. See the image below:**



It is assumed the definition is corrected.

~~**Module 1 Slide 39** – Talks about the CLC II requiring employers to have a JHSC. Every jurisdiction in Canada has similar requirements. Usually, employers with 20 or more workers employed are required to establish a JHSC. It would be beneficial to change this slide.~~ **The slide has been corrected.**

~~**Module 1 Slide 41** – The slide talks about the OHS Act, where the provinces each have their own OHS Acts. It would be better if the slide read, **Under the different OHS Acts.**~~ **The slide has been corrected.**

~~**Module 1 Slide 43** – The slide talks about the new rules under the revised legislation in BC. The legislation came into effect January 2024. It would be a good idea to revise this slide. It would also show the course is being updated often.~~ **The slide has been removed so this is corrected.**

~~**Module 2 Slide 21** – A worker is shown with complete PPE but no gloves. Suggested using AI to draw some gloves on the subject.~~ **The slide has been corrected.**

References:

CCOHS Asbestos Control - https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/asbestos/control.html

CCOHS Asbestos Health Effects - https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/asbestos/effects.html



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