

The Asbestos Directives 2003/18/EC and 2009/148/EC

Costs - £41.1m per year ([Open Europe](#))

Talking Points

Rigid regulations send costs soaring

British farmers face a £6bn bill for the removal of white asbestos, deemed to be much safer than blue and brown asbestos variants. But as all asbestos is to be treated the same, businesses face extensive costs for white asbestos removal which used to be buried but now has to be treated at a hazardous waste site. ([Source](#): Asbestos Watchdog)

What is it?

The 2003 and 2009 directives revised the 1987 directive on protecting workers involved with the manufacture of asbestos products. It extended the scope of the directive to include the removal of asbestos and repair of asbestos products.

The complete [2009 Directive](#) mandates employers should provide appropriate training for workers on:

- properties of asbestos and health effects;
- products/materials that may contain asbestos;
- operations that could result in asbestos exposure and the importance of preventive controls;
- safe work practices, controls and protective equipment;
- the appropriate role, choice, selection, limitations and proper use of respiratory equipment;
- emergency procedures;
- decontamination procedures;
- waste disposal;
- medical examination requirements.

There is a heavy [regulatory burden](#) for businesses. They have to assume all products contain asbestos unless proven otherwise and take considerable care to note and detail all products/items that may contain asbestos in the workplace whilst keeping a rolling log on all materials. Business must [notify the Health and Safety Executive of](#):

- (a) the location of the work site,
- (b) the types and quantities of asbestos used or handled,
- (c) the activities and processes involved,
- (d) the number of workers involved,
- (e) the starting date and duration of the work,
- (f) measures taken to limit the exposure of workers to asbestos.

This notification must change and be re-submitted when the nature of work involved increases the likelihood of exposure to asbestos.

It further falls on businesses to assess the likelihood of anyone coming into contact with asbestos materials and detail a plan how those risks are to be managed. These need to be constantly updated and the business must take all the required steps to put the plan into action.

Processes that involve spraying or insulating with asbestos are prohibited. Employers shall ensure that no worker is exposed to an airborne concentration of asbestos in excess of 0.1 fibres per cubic centimetre across an average of 8 hours.

The European Commission instructed the UK in 2009 to fully implement the Directive ([source](#)).