

Housing Division Notice

Date: August 20, 2004

HDN# 2004 - 73

This applicable legislation/policy is to be implemented by the housing provider(s) under the following programs:

Please note, if your program is **not checked**, this change is **not applicable** to your project.

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Federal Non-Profit Housing Program

Private Non-Profit Housing Program

Co-operative Non-Profit Housing Program

Municipal Non-Profit Housing Program (Pre-1986)

Local Housing Corporation

**Subject: ASBESTOS – POTENTIAL HEALTH RISK DUE TO ASBESTOS IN
LOOSE FILL VERMICULITE INSULATION**

Background:

Information on the above has recently been provided by Health Canada, reported in the media and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The Health Canada notice is self explanatory and is available on the Internet at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca> or at <http://www.cmhc.ca> Follow the links for asbestos. This is a newly discovered issue, which concerns loose fill vermiculite insulation used in attics. Until now, this type of insulation was considered to be safe and non-toxic. Health Canada now warns that asbestos is present in certain brands of vermiculite used in houses.

Action Required:

All Housing Providers must operate their portfolios in accordance with all applicable statutes and regulations, including those regarding asbestos. In brief, building owners must have an asbestos management plan, which meets the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*:

- Designated Substance – Asbestos, R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 837, and
- Designated Substance – Asbestos on construction Projects and in Buildings and Repair Operations, R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 838

Briefly, these regulations require landlords to:

1. inventory asbestos containing materials in their portfolio,
2. train all staff who are likely to contact asbestos,
3. notify contractors if they may contact asbestos during their work, and
4. abate certain asbestos containing materials.

Regarding public housing, the former Ontario Housing Corporation properties were transferred to local housing corporations complete with functioning asbestos management programs. Asbestos is not an environmental hazard under the *Environmental Protection Act*. Ontario Housing Corporation does not retain liability for asbestos under the *Social Housing Reform Act*.

The asbestos regulations have been in force for fourteen years, therefore all Housing Providers ought to have long-standing asbestos management programs. This notice serves as a reminder that these programs must be active and must now include vermiculite.

Please confirm that your group does indeed have an active asbestos management program which now also includes vermiculite, by September 30, 2004. Confirmation should be sent to Domenic Anello, Program Officer, City of London Housing Division - FAX 661-5804

Confirmation of these programs will also form part of the Operational Reviews undertaken by the Housing Division.

Louise Stevens
Director of Municipal Housing