

### Working with asbestos

Asbestos is the greatest single cause of work-related deaths in the UK. If you are already an owner of commercial property or thinking about acquiring a commercial property, you should be aware that there is now a 'duty to manage' asbestos. The regulations have generally been in force since November 2002.

The duty to manage means that those in control of commercial premises must:

- Take reasonable steps to find and assess the condition of materials likely to contain asbestos
- Presume materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not
- Make and keep up-to-date records of the location and condition of the asbestos containing materials (ACMs) – including anything they suspect to be an ACM
- Assess the risk of the likelihood of anyone being exposed to fibres from these materials
- Prepare a plan setting out how the risks from the materials are to be managed
- Take any steps needed to put the plan into action
- Review and monitor the plans frequently
- Provide information on the location and condition of the materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them

Anyone in control of commercial premises will be expected to have systems and action plans in place for managing the risk of asbestos exposure. However, there is evidence to suggest that many companies have been reluctant to respond to the regulations.

Anyone with a duty to manage who fails to comply with the regulations faces fines and potential imprisonment. It is, therefore, important that you are aware of whether there is asbestos in your building.

### How we can help

You can visit [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos) for further information or contact our Commercial Property & Development team on **01942 777777**, who will be able to put you in touch with a specialist who can help you.

## About Stephansons

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