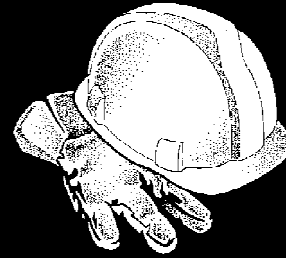



TRAINING GUIDE

FIBERGLASS



1994

Before you begin the meeting...

- Does this topic relate to the work the crew is doing? If not, choose another topic.*
- Has the crew completed basic Hazard Communication training? It will help them understand this topic.*
- Did you read this Training Guide and fill in the blanks where the  appears? (To find the information you need, look over the Safety Walkaround Checklist for this topic.)*
- Did you bring labeled containers and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) for some fiberglass products used on the site?*

Begin: Did you ever hear of “itching powder”? You could buy it years ago in stores that sold gags and jokes. If you have ever worked with fiberglass, you won’t be surprised to hear that it was the main ingredient in “itching powder.” Fiberglass and similar insulation materials can cause severe itching.

But itching isn’t the only problem. If you inhale high concentrations of fibers from these products over a long period of time, there’s a chance they may cause lung disease. Right now, nobody knows for sure. On this job site the rule will be to keep exposure to a minimum. We’d rather be safe now than sorry later.

You or a crew member may want to add a personal story about fiberglass.

Next, discuss with the crew what types of fibrous insulation material are used at this particular job site, and where:



ASK THE CREW THESE QUESTIONS:

After each question, give the crew time to suggest possible answers. Use the information following each question to add points that no one mentions.

1. What symptoms can you get if you work around fiberglass?

- **Skin and eye contact:** In addition to itching, fiberglass can cause **skin irritation**, redness, and swelling. Some people get “fiberglass warts,” a type of skin inflammation. The fibers can also irritate your **eyes** and even cause serious eye injury if you don’t get proper treatment.

- **Breathing:** Inhaled fibers may cause coughing, throat irritation, bronchitis, or lung irritation. Small fibers can stick deep in your lungs. Long-term exposure to high concentrations of these fibers may possibly lead to permanent **lung disease**. Cal/OSHA requires fiberglass products to be labeled with a warning that they may cause cancer.



Show the crew the sample labeled containers you brought to the meeting.

2. **For some people, fiberglass gets less irritating over time. They “get used to it.” Is fiberglass safe once it stops bothering you?**
 - No. Remember the possible danger of lung disease if you breathe high concentrations of the fibers over a long period of time. You may still have this risk even if you’ve stopped getting immediate symptoms when you work with fiberglass.
3. **What about new insulation materials that can be used instead of fiberglass? Are they safer?**
 - No one knows yet. Whether or not these materials (like refractory ceramic mineral fibers) pose a real health hazard is currently being studied. Until the results are known, it’s best to be cautious.
4. **How can you get more information about the hazards of a particular fiberglass product (or similar insulation product)?**
 - Read the **Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)** for the product. MSDSs are required by law. They’ll tell you the ingredients and possible health and safety hazards. Be sure the MSDS you’re using is up to date, since the ingredients in insulation products often change. Everyone working on the site has a right to see MSDSs.

On this job, you can get MSDSs from-



Give the name and location of the person to see: _____

Let’s look at some MSDSs for fiberglass (or similar) products we use on this job.

Show the crew the sample MSDSs you brought to the meeting. Explain them briefly.



(MSDSs are covered in more detail during basic Hazard Communication training, which everyone on the crew should already have completed.)

5. **What are some ways to protect yourself from fiberglass and similar materials?**
 - Work in a **well-ventilated** area if you can.
 - **Stop** what you’re doing if you notice symptoms. You may need to change the way you’re doing the work, or wear protective equipment (like a respirator or gloves).
 - Keep fiberglass and similar products off your **skin** and out of your **eyes**. Wash any exposed skin frequently with **cold** water—this keep your pores closed. Wear clean work clothes every day. (If you take your contaminated work clothes home, wash them separately from other laundry to keep your family from being exposed.)
 - **Don’t eat, drink, or smoke** on the job. Anything you put in your mouth could have been contaminated by fibers. Wash up first.
 - Use **personal protective equipment (PPE)**, if needed.

6. What personal protective equipment might you need?

- **Skin and eye protection.** If skin or eye contact with fiberglass is a danger on your job, wear gloves, a long sleeve shirt, a neck covering, eye protection, and similar personal protective equipment (PPE). We have to supply it if it's needed.



If required, this equipment is available at: _____

- **A respirator.** If your exposure to fibers may be higher than Cal/OSHA limits, we must provide the right type of respirator, make sure it fits properly, teach you how to use it, and give you a physical to make sure you're able to wear it safely.

We will or will not require respirators on this job.



If required, respirators are available at: _____

- **An eye wash station.** Flush your eyes with water immediately if you get fiberglass or similar products in them.



Our eye wash stations are located: _____

On this job, we will also be using these additional precautions:



(PPE and Respirators are covered in more detail in separate Training Guides.)

CAL/OSHA REGULATIONS

Explain: Most of the safety measures we've talked about are required by Cal/OSHA. We have to take these precautions—it's the law. For example, for fiberglass and most other fibrous insulation materials, Cal/OSHA says we must make sure no one on the site is exposed to more than **10 milligrams per cubic meter** of air, averaged over an 8-hour shift. This is called the **permissible exposure limit** (PEL) for fiberglass. But there are **lower** limits if the dust is very fine and easy to breathe deep into the lungs. I have a Checklist of the Cal/OSHA regulations on fiberglass. If you'd like to know more, see me after the meeting.

COMPANY RULES

(Only if applicable.) Besides the Cal/OSHA regulations, we have some additional company rules about fiberglass and other fibrous insulation materials.

Discuss company rules: _____



COMMENTS FROM THE CREW

Ask: **Do you have any other concerns about fiberglass? Do you see any problems on our job?** *(Let the steward answer first, if there is one.)*

What about other jobs you've worked on? Have you had any experience with fiberglass that might help us work safer on this job?

GENERAL SAFETY DISCUSSION

This is a time to discuss all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during, and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any hazards from other crews? *Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.*

Do we have any old business? *Discuss past issues/problems. Report progress of investigations and action taken.*

Any new business? Any accidents/near misses/complaints? *Discuss accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.*

Please remember, we want to hear from you about *any* health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

To complete the training session:

- Circulate Sign-Off Form.*
- Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.*
- Refer action items for follow-up. (Use the sample **Hazard Report Form** in the Reference Section of this binder, or your company's own form.)*

