

## ***Denver Public Schools Asbestos Removal***

# ***Question & Answer Sheet***

## ***University Park Elementary School***

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Denver Public Schools (DPS) maintains a pro-active approach to providing students, staff, parents and all other individuals who visit our buildings, a safe functional facility with which to learn. As part of this approach we have scheduled asbestos abatement activities in this facility that will allow for the safe removal of asbestos-containing materials before planned renovation activities begin.

To help ensure a safe environment and prepare for the renovation and construction improvements at the school, during the past year qualified consultants identified specific areas where asbestos fibers will be disturbed by construction. Licensed, qualified asbestos removal contractors then were selected by the DPS Construction Services Office to conduct the removal. The safety of all students, staff, and visitors at the school are the prime concern during removal of the asbestos-containing material.

### ***What is asbestos and why does it have to be removed?***

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fireproof fibrous mineral which was used in construction materials before the Environmental Protection Agency declared the asbestos fibers as damaging to our health. When these building materials are disturbed during construction by demolition, drilling, cutting, or sanding, the asbestos particles become airborne. Once airborne, the fibers can be inhaled and then become a health hazard. DPS is removing the asbestos-containing materials in those areas of the schools where construction activities will occur to eliminate any potential release of asbestos fibers into the building environment.

### ***When will this work take place?***

Abatement will take place over Spring break starting after school on March 25, 2016 through April 2, 2016.

### ***Why is this work being performed during the school year?***

Asbestos removal must be completed before other construction activities can begin at a particular school. Because the overall program schedule requires construction during the school year to meet established deadlines, some asbestos removal must be completed while school is in progress.

### ***What types of materials will be removed?***

We'll be abating asbestos containing pipe insulation throughout the crawl spaces beneath the building.

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## **How is asbestos removed?**

Licensed contractors follow federal and state controlled procedures for removing asbestos-containing materials from buildings. The areas where the removal takes place are sealed off in an airtight enclosure. The workers operate inside the isolated areas and use wet methods and specialized vacuum equipment to remove the asbestos-containing materials.

## **What do the work areas look like?**

Most of the time the work areas are enclosed by a solid, sealed barrier. Qualified personnel continuously monitor the enclosure so that no unauthorized people can enter. The workers wear respirators and white protective suits and in most cases will not be visible to anyone at the school, because of the solid, sealed barriers.

## **Does the removal process present a health hazard?**

**No!** Strict safety procedures have been implemented to protect students, staff, and building occupants. First, the removal is being performed by professionals who are very familiar with the safety regulations, and they are being monitored by an industrial hygiene consulting firm and the DPS Construction Services Office specialists. Second, the work areas are isolated and clearly marked so that the students and teachers are aware of their location. Third, the airtight work area is controlled by special air filtering equipment which separates and collects any airborne asbestos fibers so that no fibers escape the enclosure. Air monitoring is conducted continuously in and outside the work areas, the school, and classroom areas to be sure the school environment remains safe, with no escaping asbestos fibers.

## **Who is making sure the removal is being conducted safely?**

Asbestos removal must meet strict federal, state, and local safety regulations. DPS has retained professional industrial hygiene consulting firms to monitor each removal project daily. These firms supervise the contractor's activities and conduct air monitoring throughout the process to make sure the applicable regulations are enforced. DPS Construction Services Office representatives also visit the project sites to ensure that all safety regulations are fully enforced.

## **When are the areas safe to use again?**

As each work area is completed, it must pass very detailed and stringent clearance procedures. Highly qualified DPS personnel visually inspect the areas to verify that asbestos has been removed properly. Then, air monitoring is performed to ensure the air is clean and meets the strict clearance criteria required by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Air Pollution Control Division of the Colorado Department of Health.

If you have any questions relating to this necessary project, please call:

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cc: Cabinet

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