



Operations and Maintenance Work for AHERA Compliance

Operations & Maintenance ("O&M") work, also referred to as Small Scale Short Duration ("SSSD") work, has been described by Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards ("DLS") in 454 CMR 28.00 and AHERA 40 CFR 763, Subpart E.

Local Education Agencies must ensure that their school maintenance staff does not conduct unauthorized asbestos abatement, under the presumption that such work would qualify as O&M or SSSD work. When multiple regulations apply, it can be confusing as to which terms and conditions apply from each regulation. Simply put, the most stringent would apply. No one regulation is comprehensive, and compliance requires cross-referencing to find the appropriate application for a particular issue.

What is an O&M activity?

Operations & Maintenance (O&M) activities, as defined in 454 CMR 28.11(1), **cannot be carried out in buildings subject to AHERA**. O&M activity in non-school buildings is limited to 10 square feet or 25 linear feet and is not the sum of the individual layers.

Instead, Massachusetts DLS considers O&M activity in schools as **Asbestos Associated Project Work or Small-Scale Short Duration (SSSD)**:

- Any work operation involving the disturbance of: (a) three or fewer linear feet of friable asbestos on or in pipes, ducts, or wires or (b) three or fewer square feet of friable or non-friable asbestos on or in structures or components other than pipes, ducts or wires.

SSSD Activities have special conditions:

- Limited to small amounts of friable ACM only if required in an emergency or routine maintenance work and **not intended solely as asbestos abatement**.
- Can not exceed amounts greater than can be contained in a single prefabricated, mini enclosure. The enclosure shall conform spatially and geometrically to the localized work area, to perform its intended function.

In 454 CMR 28.02, MA DLS describes Small Scale Short Duration activities as:

- Removal of asbestos containing insulation on pipes
- Removal of small quantities of asbestos containing insulation on beams or above ceilings
- Replacement of an asbestos containing gasket on a valve.
- Installation or removal of a small section of drywall
- Installation of electrical conduits through or proximate to ACM
- Removal of small quantities of ACM only if required in the performance of another maintenance activity not intended as asbestos abatement.
- Removal of asbestos containing thermal system insulation not to exceed amounts greater than that which can be contained in a single glove bag

- Minor repairs to damaged thermal system insulation which do not require removal
- Repairs to a piece of asbestos containing wallboard

What training is required to conduct SSSD activity?

MA DLS will permit a person with the 16-hour Asbestos Associated Project Worker training to disturb up to three linear or square feet of ACM. All the work practices and controls set forth in 454 CMR 28.11(3), (4), (5) must be implemented.

MA DLS establishes the worker protection requirements at 454 CMR 28.04. Any worker performing SSSD activities must be provided with personal protective equipment, such as respirators and disposable coveralls. Individuals wearing respirators must participate in a medical monitoring program and respirator program in compliance with the OSHA standard. Both a written medical monitoring program and respirator program must be included in the AHERA management plan if any public employees will conduct SSSD work.

What are the requirements of SSSD work for non-friable ACM?

DLS had determined that non-friable ACM should be treated no differently than friable ACM because nonfriable ACM can become friable during the work operations, from forces exerted upon it. The creation of asbestos containing dust must be avoided throughout the work project. All applicable control methods and work practices must be used to prevent the creation of dust, and the subsequent migration of that dust into the ambient building environment. Final cleaning and visual inspections are part of the work requirements and will be described in greater detail in the school O&M program.

What is an O&M program?

The O&M program is a set of work practices designed to maintain ACM in good condition, ensure cleanup of asbestos fibers previously released, prevent further release by minimizing disturbance or damage to ACM, and provide for long term surveillance of ACM within the facility. A consultant will typically review and update the O&M program during the 3-year reinspection process.

All schools must have an O&M program that is specific to each school and describes how the ACM in that school must be maintained, based on the location and condition of the ACM, as well as other risk factors. This may include a schedule for special cleaning in areas where friable ACM is present, a schedule for waxing and cleaning floors, and policies regarding the storage of materials in the direct vicinity of any friable ACM.

If school employees are permitted to perform SSSD activities, records of that work must be kept in the AHERA management plan. Schools that do not permit their employees to conduct SSSD activities should include a written policy stating that school employees are prohibited from disturbing any amounts of ACM.

As part of the O&M program, schools must post warning signs in maintenance areas, boiler rooms, mechanical rooms and storage areas, indicating that ACM is present in those areas. Schools must also notify any outside vendors who will perform work in the school that asbestos is present, and to ensure that their work will not disturb or damage the ACM.