

# Asbestos Guides

## Dispelling the myth..some types of asbestos are less 'hazardous' than others...

You may be aware that there is more than one kind of asbestos type. In fact there are 6, the most common three being Crocidolite (blue), Amosite (grunerite) (brown), Chrysotile (white). Chrysotile (white) asbestos belongs to the serpentine class of asbestos, and many people believe it is less dangerous than the minerals in the other class of asbestos known as the amphibole class, Crocidolite (blue), Amosite (grunerite) (brown). Chrysotile is more flexible than the other types of asbestos and has a wider range of uses because of that quality. The danger is less in some situations but it is not accurate to simply say Chrysotile is less deadly. Asbestos in all forms are known to be human carcinogens.

Prior to the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 coming into force, the following control limits and action levels applied:

### Control Limits

For chrysotile alone:

- 0.3 fibres/ml of air averaged over any continuous period of 4 hours;
- 0.9 fibres/ml of air averaged over any continuous period of 10 minutes;

For any other form of asbestos either alone or in mixtures, including mixtures of chrysotile with any other form of asbestos:

- 0.2 fibres/ml of air averaged over any continuous period of 4 hours;
- 0.6 fibres/ml of air averaged over any continuous period of 10 minutes.

### Action Levels

For chrysotile alone: 72 fibre-hours/ml of air

For any other form of asbestos either alone or in mixtures, including mixtures of chrysotile with any other form of asbestos:  
48 fibre-hours/ml of air

Looking at the higher limits, it is easy to see why many people believe Chrysotile to be less dangerous.

However, post 2006, the action levels were no longer included in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 and a new control limit of 0.1 f/cm<sup>3</sup> when averaged over a continuous period of 4 hours was introduced for **ALL** types of asbestos.

So, in summary, some types of asbestos are **NOT** less 'hazardous' than others.