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## Asbestos in Sheetrock

Over the past few years, a small percentage of new drywall shipments have been found to contain up to 7 % asbestos in samples analyzed prior to installation. It is suspected that this is probably due to shortages inflicted by hurricanes in the gulf coast area. Several school districts have reported finding asbestos in drywall that were purchased from local home improvement companies.

Most construction contractors are not aware that new drywall can be asbestos containing (it is **not** illegal to manufacture and distribute asbestos-containing drywall). Therefore contractors are

not aware that they could be installing asbestos-containing materials. It is a violation to install asbestos-containing material under current TAHPA rules unless there is no alternative materials. It is all a violation to install any new suspect material in a public building without obtaining current MSDS's. MSDS's are requirement for each shipment that might be a different brand, batch, or any other variation that differentiates it from other shipments.

Be aware that any new building materials (especially those imported from outside the US)

could be asbestos-containing and construction contractors are required to have MSDS's for every suspect material installed.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is currently developing outreach guidance materials to educate the regulated community. The DSHS also requests the cooperation of all asbestos licenses and building owners to make the construction industry aware of this issue and encourage them to take steps to comply with all application regulations.

## Major Changes to Petroleum Storage Tank Rules

New rules for underground petroleum tanks (USTs) took effect on January 1, 2009. The major changes for UST owners and/or operators include:

- Install a secondary containment for new and replacement tanks and new piping. Monitor the interstitial space (the space between the primary and secondary wall) for a release of product.

- Install a dispenser sump with any new dispenser.
- Ensure all sumps and manways used for release detection installed on or after January 1, 2009 are:
  - Compatible with the stored substance.
  - Tightness-tested at installation and every 3 years thereafter.

- Equipped with a liquid-sensing probe that will alert the UST system owner.

The TCEQ no longer collects registration fees, but prior tank fees are still due.

These are only part of the rule changes. For complete rule changes, visit [www.sblga.info](http://www.sblga.info).

## Survey Finds High Rate of PPE Non-Compliance

A recent survey by Kimberly-Clark Professional found 89% of safety professional polled at the 2008 National Safety Council (NSC) have witnessed workers failing to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when necessary.

When asked what is the number one workplace safety issue in their facilities, one third of the respondents said worker compliance with safety protocols. Second was insufficient management

support and/or resources for health and safety functions. Under-reporting of workplace injuries and illness was third, following by training a multi-lingual, multicultural workforce and escalating work compensation costs.

34% of those responding to the survey said the economy had affected work safety training programs. Of those, 63% said there was less money for education and training; 42% said there were a

reduced number of personnel to handle safety training tasks; and 33% said the economy had caused business concerns to take precedence over safety concerns.

Those responding to the survey said they have taken steps or intend to take steps to improve existing education and training programs and plan to purchase more comfortable PPE. In and effort to improve PPE compliance.

## Help Small Businesses Take Care of Texas

The following 6 tips will help Small Businesses take steps to improve air and water quality, conserve energy and save money.

- 1. Start the Day with Energy-Efficient Appliances.** Use built-in timers for coffee pots and other small appliances. Use Energy Star appliances.
- 2. Turn Off Lights.** Turning off lights, using fluorescent light bulbs, and Energy Star fixtures will save energy and lower electric bills.
- 3. Unplug Electronics and use Power Strips.** Unplugging electronics or turning off power strips save energy.
- 4. Check for Leaks.** Fix any leaks in office faucets and toilets.
- 5. Reduce Travel.** Look for ways to work from home, compressed work-weeks, or host meeting via teleconference. When possible use public transportation.
- 6. Join Energy Star.** Small businesses can improve energy efficiency by using resources from the EPA. Sign up at [www.energystar.gov/smallbiz](http://www.energystar.gov/smallbiz) for free technical support and information. For tips to Do Your Part at home and work, go to [www.takecareoftexas.org](http://www.takecareoftexas.org).