

Building Demolitions

Public Health Impacts

Environmental disturbances caused by building demolitions can be linked to significant adverse health effects due to potential human exposures associated with affected air quality, distribution of hazardous materials and/or contamination of nearby environments, including dispersal of pest populations. To minimize associated risks to health, there are a number of things that both property owners and demolition contractors must consider before, during and after any building demolition project. These include - but are not necessarily limited to - the following:

Hazardous Materials Survey as mandated by the Ministry of Labour prior to initiating any demolition project:

- Identification of any hazardous materials in and around the structure to be demolished (i.e. Asbestos Containing Material / Underground Storage Tanks)
- Appropriate written plan to manage, contain and/or remove any such material

Identify any existing pests that could be dispersed:

- Ensure that pests of public health concern (i.e. bats / rats / mice / cockroaches) that could pose a health risk to neighbouring properties / communities are dealt with prior to; during and after demolition

Site planning prior to and during any demolition to minimize inappropriate distribution / escape of hazardous material into the environment:

- Erect effective barriers to prevent contamination of surroundings
- Designate appropriate areas within demolition project to ensure safe / secure storage and control of dust causing activities relative to sensitive surroundings
- Arrange for appropriate disposal of hazardous waste
- Ensure potential contaminated runoff cannot leave the site

Work plans developed in consultation with health and safety representative should:

- Identify hazards associated with the demolition, assess these hazards and outline procedures to eliminate or control risks arising from all hazards
- Outline safe methods of demolition to be used including arrangements for the protection of the public

Management of demolition equipment during any demolition project:

- No idling vehicles
- Wash or clean vehicles before leaving the site if close to sensitive receptors
- Cover all loads leaving the site
- Avoid damage to local areas by designing appropriate driving paths

Site activities should minimize creation of and/or distribution of hazardous materials:

- Minimize dust creating activities by using dust suppressant where applicable
- Limit stockpiles to the shortest time possible
- Practice appropriate waste management strategies on-site that contribute to appropriate waste disposal and avoid unnecessary site contamination

For more information, contact Environmental Health at 519-663-5317 ext. 2300

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