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Defend your home and health from Sumas Mountain asbestos

Get a clean start. Assure your home and vehicles are asbestos-free using simple air/dust sample methods you can do yourself at a fraction of the cost of hiring a professional. Protect your home as much as possible from Sumas River flooding and flood deposits. Then take some or all of the following measures to keep asbestos from being tracked in, blown in, or carried in on potentially contaminated belongings/objects from outdoors.

- **If Sumas River floodwaters have reached your property or home at any time in the past:**

- Consider disposing of and/or replacing **porous** items (such as carpeting, drapes, etc.) that may have been affected already.
- **Non-porous** items (such as metal, wood or plastic items) can be cleaned. A systematic approach is important, as you can't see individual asbestos fibers.
 - Do not dry-dust, sweep, or vacuum (with a typical household vacuum) items that may contain asbestos. These steps could disturb tiny asbestos fibers and release them into the air.
 - Thoroughly clean all interior surfaces of the home. Remove dust by wet wiping and/or use of an industrial grade HEPA vacuum cleaner used by certified asbestos contractors.
 - Industrial grade HEPA air scrubbers (2000 cubic feet per minute capacity) will continually clean the air of any dust incidentally released from surfaces during the wet rag/mop process. These air scrubbers are commonly used by certified asbestos contractors and may be rented or purchased.
 - Document your clean start by collecting representative air/dust samples (described in last section below).
 - Use defensive strategies to minimize/eliminate "track in" of outside dust/dirt into your car and home.

Use defensive measures - before and after flooding

- **Defense against flood waters:**

- Defend your home against flood waters as you normally would, regardless of the presence/absence of asbestos contamination.
- Use emergency barriers like sandbags or berms or walls (in compliance with existing land use/water quality regulations) to provide a defensive perimeter against flood waters that could reach the home.

- **Defense following flooding:**

- Take action immediately. Asbestos isn't the only issue -- mold growth starts within 24 hours.
- Isolate the affected area and prevent "track in" to unaffected parts your home.
- Do a thorough, verified, wet cleaning of the affected area.
- Employ defensive strategies outlined below.

- **Long-term habits to defend against "track-in" on people, pets, or things:**

- Adopt and strictly enforce a "no shoe" policy within the home. Assure that footwear worn outside never enters the home.
- Have "inside" or "outside" pets, if possible. Consider not allowing pets to have routine access between inside and outside, say, via a cat/dog door. Occasional monitored excursions of pets should be followed by thorough cleaning of the animal prior to entry into the home.
- Before bringing outdoor items indoors, wash down non-porous items that may have been outside long enough to have accumulated dust from airborne sources or ground/soil contact. Wash porous items (clothes, stuffed furniture, fleecy toys) or if washing isn't possible, use your best judgment. Was it in an area with flood deposits? Was it outside during dry or windy weather? How long was it there?
- Ideally, your laundry area should be separate from the main living area. If possible, use an area outside the protected building "envelope," a space that isn't connected to the HEPA-protected household heating or cooling system.
- Apply similar logic to your car. Park so as to minimize the chance of tracking mud and dust from flood deposits into your car.

- **Systems to keep out airborne asbestos from the surrounding environment:**

- Cover and isolate affected outdoor areas (fresh topsoil, for example). Covering or removing Sumas Mountain material in your yard will reduce the amount of asbestos that can be tracked or blown in to your living area.
- Assure that, by design, your HVAC (heating, ventilating, air conditioning) system creates and maintains “positive air pressure” (air pushing outward at all building envelope penetrations). Install top quality HEPA filtered outside air intakes to the HVAC system to prevent asbestos from entering the system with fresh outside ventilation air.
- To monitor and assure positive pressure within the home, you can install a magnehelic device or digital differential pressure gauge. The 24/7 positive pressure prevents outside dust from drifting indoors via windows or other penetrations of the building “envelope.” An alarm on the device will tell you if you have opened too many windows, for example, and undermined the positive pressure balance.
- You can run portable HEPA filters indoors to constantly lower the concentration of all airborne dust.
- Periodic sampling of the filtered intake air helps ensure that the filter is working properly.

Is the defense working?

- **Test your air and the dust on surfaces in your home to confirm that your asbestos defense is working.** You or a professional can test as often as needed for peace of mind.
 - Dust sampling:
 - Learn the simple method to collect a sample of settled dust within the home.
 - Have the sample analyzed at a certified laboratory.
 - Air sampling:
 - Use an appropriate air sampling pump and filter cassettes.
 - Learn the simple process of using a calibrated pump to pull a specified volume of air through the filter cassette to collect a representative sample of indoor air.
 - Have the sample analyzed by a certified laboratory using transmission electron microscopy (TEM).

For additional details regarding our recommendations, please call the Northwest Clean Air Agency at 360-428-1617.

Keep an eye on our website. www.nwcleanair.org We plan to update the website with additional information regarding Sumas Mountain naturally occurring asbestos.