



Ref: 111367

December 2, 2015

Her Worship Mayor Lisa Helps
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria BC V8W 1P6

MAYOR'S OFFICE
DEC 04 2015
VICTORIA, B.C.

Dear Mayor Helps:

Thank you for your letter dated November 16, 2015, to Premier Christy Clark, regarding the harmful impact of the mishandling of asbestos on workers across Canada. I have been asked to reply on behalf of the Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Responsible for Labour, who is responsible for WorkSafeBC.

Government and WorkSafeBC are keenly aware of the dangers of the mishandling of asbestos materials in the workplace. I certainly appreciate the time you have taken to write Premier Clark on this important matter.

In your letter you asked that government give serious consideration to these important safety issues concerning asbestos in the workplace. Some of the proposals in your letter fall within the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada, including the creation of a National Registry for public buildings and public maritime vessels. Although the provincial government cannot comment on matters that fall outside of its jurisdiction, I would like to provide you with some information on what WorkSafeBC is doing to address this important matter.

WorkSafeBC does have regulatory requirements for training of workers. For example, section 6.11 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* specifies that:

The employer must ensure that a worker who is at risk of exposure to asbestos is adequately instructed and trained in

- (a) the hazards of asbestos,
- (b) the means of identifying asbestos-containing material at the worksite,
- (c) the work procedures to be followed,
- (d) the correct use of the required personal protective equipment, and operation of the required engineering controls, and
- (e) the purpose and significance of any required health monitoring.

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One of the issues that Council expressed concern about is the development of a plan to better educate youth contemplating working in the construction and heavy industry sectors.

WorkSafeBC has a significant amount of resource material on their website on this topic. For example, below is the link to the WorkSafeBC Young Worker Exposure Prevention Series which includes a series of guides that can be used by teachers, employers and young workers intended to raise awareness of the occupational exposure hazards that put young workers at risk.

<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/YoungWorker/Resources-ExposurePreventionSeries.asp>

WorkSafeBC also produces a booklet "*Young workers: Keeping them safe from exposure to asbestos*" which offers strategies and resources to help employers prevent young worker exposure to asbestos in the workplace. It includes information about the risks associated with asbestos and offers links to safety talks, videos, and print resources.

http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/PH108.pdf

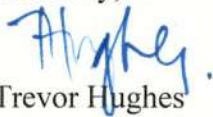
I am advised that there are also provincial Safety Associations dedicated to improving workplace health and safety that have information on managing and working with asbestos. These include the following:

BC Construction Safety Alliance - <https://www.bccsa.ca/>

BC Association of Restoration Contractors - <http://bcarc.ca/>

I would like to again thank the City of Victoria Council for taking the time to consider the safe handling of asbestos. I can assure you that government and WorkSafeBC are addressing this important matter as a priority to ensure the safety of all workers who encounter asbestos in the workplace.

Sincerely,



Trevor Hughes
Assistant Deputy Minister

pc: Premier Christy Clark

Honourable Rich Coleman
Minister of Natural Gas Development and Minister Responsible for Housing and
Deputy Premier

Honourable Andrew Wilkinson
Minister of Advanced Education

Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour