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TO: Grant County Healthcare Providers
Grant County Media

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

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EPA Identified Asbestos Containing Materials in an old Partially Demolished, Unoccupied School in Soap Lake

Delancey-Houghton Elementary School

SOAP LAKE, WA – The Grant County Health District (GCHD) was notified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that asbestos containing materials were found at the Delancey-Houghton Elementary School located on the corner of 4th Avenue Southeast and Canna Street South in Soap Lake, Washington. **The school is partially demolished and unoccupied.** EPA plans to clean up the asbestos contaminated materials this spring (2016). Living and working next to the school poses a relatively low risk; however, disturbing or having direct contact with materials that contain asbestos may increase the risk of lung disease.

What you should do

- Do not allow children to play at or around the school.
- Do not enter the school or the area immediately around the school.
- Do not disturb any materials found immediately around the school.
- Limit the amount of time you spend outdoors around the school on windy days until the cleanup is complete.

What is asbestos

Asbestos is a mineral fiber that occurs naturally in rock and soil, because of its fiber strength and heat resistance asbestos has been used in a variety of building construction materials. Breathing asbestos can cause long term health problems. Repeated exposure over many years to asbestos can cause lung cancer and other lung diseases. Disease symptoms from breathing asbestos may take years to develop. In general, the more asbestos you breathe, the greater the chance of getting sick from it.

How Asbestos can affect your health

Studies show that people who were exposed to asbestos in factories and shipyards and breathed high levels of asbestos fibers increased their risk of:

- lung cancer;
- mesothelioma, a cancer of the lining of the chest and the abdominal cavity;
- asbestosis, a disease in which the lungs become scarred with fibrous tissue.

The risk of these lung diseases increases with the number of asbestos fibers inhaled. The risk of lung cancer from inhaling asbestos fibers is also greater if you smoke. **Symptoms from asbestos usually come from exposure over many years, if you are currently experiencing any symptoms it is not likely related to this specific site.** It can take 20 to 30 years for symptoms to appear.

Most people exposed to small amounts of asbestos do not develop these health problems. However, crumbled or powdered asbestos material may release asbestos fibers, which can be inhaled into the lungs.

Where you can get more information

If you have questions, concerns, or would like more information, please call:

- For questions about your health or symptoms you are feeling, see your doctor.
- For questions about the health effects of asbestos contact Grant County Health District: 509-766-7960.
- For questions about clean-up plans contact Dale Becker, On-Scene Coordinator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (206) 553-6235.

Asbestos online resources:

- <https://www.epa.gov/asbestos>
- <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts61.pdf>

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