

ABANDONED MINES



Photos from left to right: close up of serpentinite rock; asbestos tailings and; close up of asbestos in serpentinite rock

Clinton Creek Mine FACTS ABOUT ASBESTOS

Asbestos is a combination of several minerals that form long crystal like fibres. The word “asbestos” comes from a Greek word meaning inextinguishable or almost indestructible. The Greeks referred to asbestos as the “miracle mineral” because of its soft and flexible properties, as well as its resistance to extreme heat.

Asbestos was commonly used among manufacturers and builders in the late 19th and into the 20th century because of its resistance to heat, electricity and chemical damage, sound absorption properties and its resistance to being torn apart. When asbestos is used for its resistance to fire or heat, the fibers are often mixed with cement or woven into fabric or mats. Asbestos was used in vehicle brakes, insulating buildings and electric ovens.

Unfortunately, asbestos has been found to cause health problems in people who have long term inhalation exposure. Asbestosis is chronic inflammation of the lungs, causing shortness of breath and increasing the chance of developing lung cancer. The type of cancer associated with asbestos exposure is rare in the general population and cases are mostly found in individuals who have had some form of long

term exposure to asbestos, usually from the workplace or from living in an area contaminated with asbestos dust. These diseases usually take many years to develop and may not arise for several decades after exposure. Because of the danger, many governments have banned the use of asbestos in most products, and health and safety regulations contain maximum allowable levels of exposure for asbestos.

There are three types of asbestos; white, brown and blue. White asbestos is the most common and is also known as chrysotile. It is mined from serpentinite rock. White asbestos is the least hazardous type of asbestos and is the type that was mined at Clinton Creek.

Asbestos Risks at the Abandoned Clinton Creek Mine

Inhalation is the main health risk associated with asbestos. Asbestos that is sometimes found in older buildings, and the type most people are familiar with, is a fine powder-like material, not like the coarse raw asbestos that is at the mine.

Risks associated with air-born asbestos are relatively low at the Clinton Creek site.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Tel: (867) 393-7098
Fax: (867) 456-6780

yukonabandonedmines@gov.yk.ca
www.emr.gov.yk.ca/aam/



Photos from left to right: warning sign posted at the Clinton Creek site; veins of asbestos showing in rock and; close up of asbestos in waste rock

Air-quality testing has been done at the site and results indicate the human health risks are minimal.

Airborne asbestos monitoring began at Clinton Creek site in 2002 during the reconstruction of the Clinton Creek channel. This continued in 2003 along with the monitoring of airborne asbestos levels at the tailings, crusher building and locations at the waste rock dumps. Monitors were also installed on equipment such as dozers and backhoes, ATVs and pickup trucks. This program continued in 2004 along with detailed monitoring around demolition that took place throughout the site.

Workers received safety training related to building demolition. Daily onsite monitoring of asbestos-fibre hazards took place during demolition. The results were below occupational health and safety requirements during all activities.

An airborne asbestos risk assessment was completed in the summer of 2004. The results of this independent study indicated that significant exposure to asbestos fibres would likely only occur when the soils and tailings that contained asbestos are disturbed by walking, use of ATVs, vehicles, or during clean-up work.

Warning signs are in place at the mine site to inform visitors of the hazards of asbestos inhalation. Protective barriers or berms have been placed around the pits.

All future activities at the site will be conducted using appropriate procedures for the protection of human health and safety.