

Construction micro-organisms: Aspergillus during demolition and refurbishment

Aspergillus is a fungus that can cause significant health problems when breathed in during certain construction work. This page tells you how to control this risk and why. You also need to be aware of the [general information on micro-organisms](#)^[1].

What you must do

Follow the [Assess, Control and Review mode](#)^[2]. Pay particular attention to the following things:

Assess

Identify and assess: You can find Aspergillus in many situations; eg heating, systems, air conditioning or insulation materials. Most healthy people are not affected. However, it can affect people with existing health problems, particularly damaged lungs or a weakened immune system. You should pay particular attention to demolition or refurbishment work where there may be vulnerable members of the public – eg hospitals or care homes.

Control

Prevent and control: You should get [specialist advice](#)^[3] where there is a significant risk from Aspergillus. Appropriate solutions may include:

- [Dust control](#)^[4] – stopping dust getting into the air
- **Ventilation** – make sure ventilation systems that are properly maintained / free from contamination before re-commissioning

Review

Supervise: Ensure that controls are effective and used by the workers.

What you should know

Aspergillus is a mould commonly found in many indoor environments. Demolition or refurbishment work, particularly of older buildings, can release fungal spores. People with damaged lungs or a weakened immune system can get a number of diseases (called Aspergillosis or farmer's lung) if they inhale these spores.

You can find more information about Aspergillus on the [NHS](#)^[5] and [Aspergillus](#)^[6] websites.

Link URLs in this page

1. general information on micro-organisms

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/healthrisks/hazardous-substances/harmful-micro-organisms.htm>

2. Assess, Control and Review model

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/healthrisks/managing-essentials/managing-essentials.htm>

3. specialist advice

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/managing/delivering/do/organising/specialist-help.htm>

4. Dust control

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/healthrisks/hazardous-substances/construction-dust.htm>

5. NHS

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Aspergillosis/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

6. Aspergillus

<http://www.aspergillus.org.uk/>