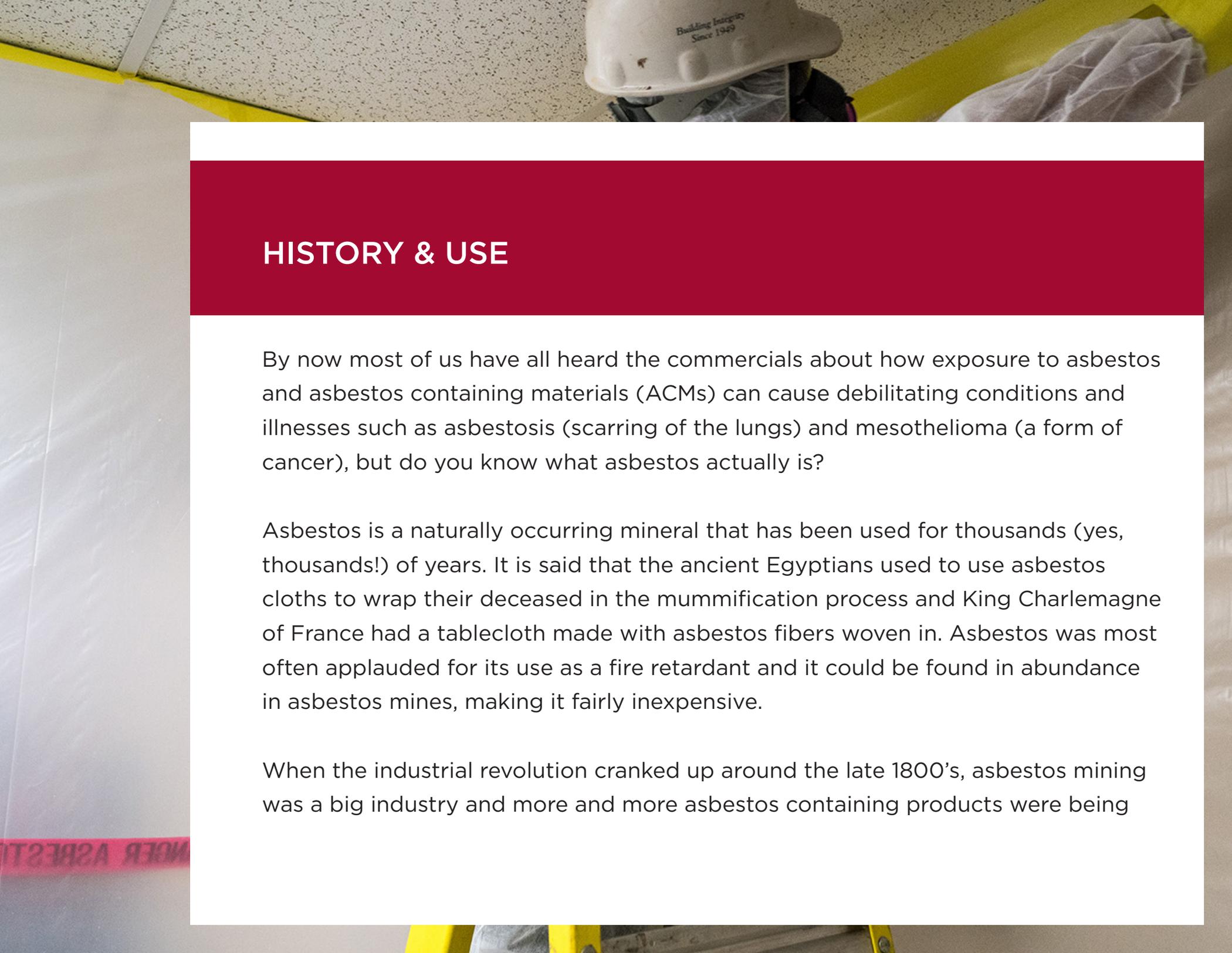




ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIALS (ACMs)

History, Use, Exposure, & Risks





HISTORY & USE

By now most of us have all heard the commercials about how exposure to asbestos and asbestos containing materials (ACMs) can cause debilitating conditions and illnesses such as asbestosis (scarring of the lungs) and mesothelioma (a form of cancer), but do you know what asbestos actually is?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that has been used for thousands (yes, thousands!) of years. It is said that the ancient Egyptians used to use asbestos cloths to wrap their deceased in the mummification process and King Charlemagne of France had a tablecloth made with asbestos fibers woven in. Asbestos was most often applauded for its use as a fire retardant and it could be found in abundance in asbestos mines, making it fairly inexpensive.

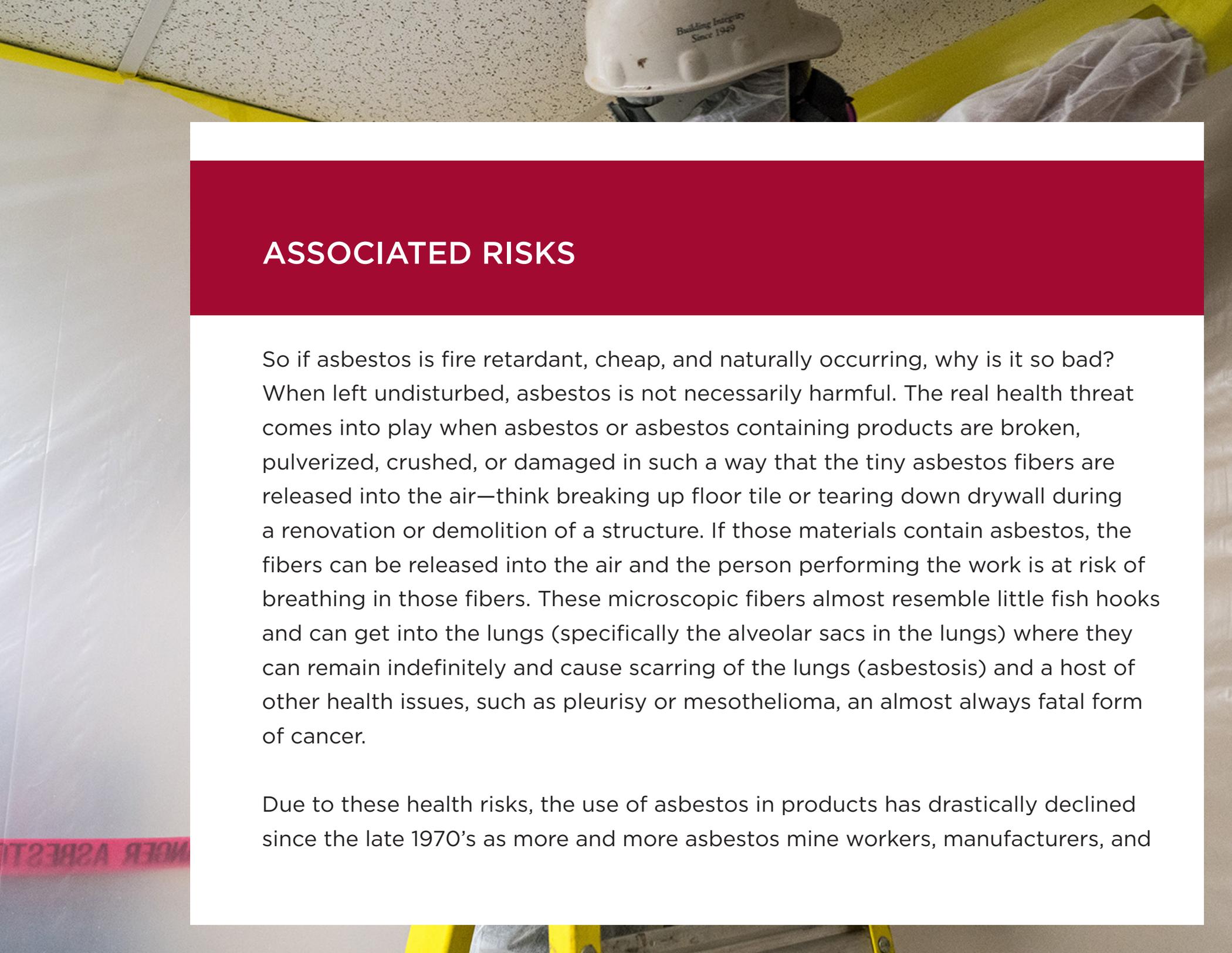
When the industrial revolution cranked up around the late 1800's, asbestos mining was a big industry and more and more asbestos containing products were being

manufactured. Asbestos could be found in anything from glue for floor tile to roofing materials in commercial buildings and homes and even curtains and comic book characters.

Yes, that's right, there was even a Marvel comic book villain named Asbestos Man (and there was also an Asbestos Lady) that fought to defeat the Human Torch.



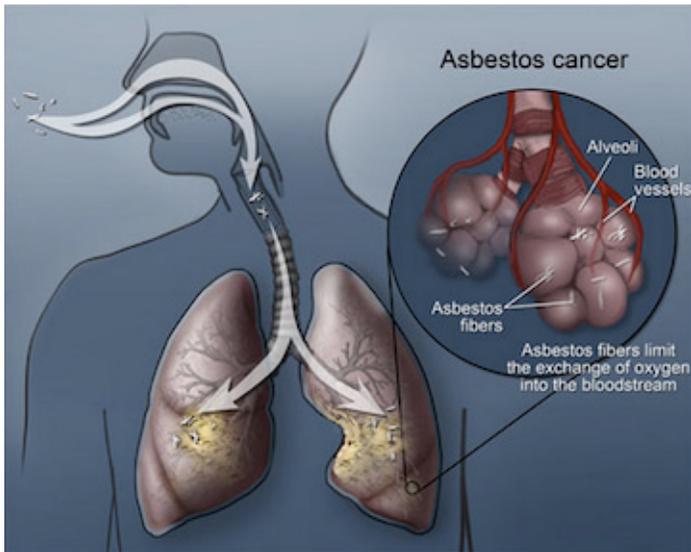
Asbestos is a naturally occurring material.



ASSOCIATED RISKS

So if asbestos is fire retardant, cheap, and naturally occurring, why is it so bad? When left undisturbed, asbestos is not necessarily harmful. The real health threat comes into play when asbestos or asbestos containing products are broken, pulverized, crushed, or damaged in such a way that the tiny asbestos fibers are released into the air—think breaking up floor tile or tearing down drywall during a renovation or demolition of a structure. If those materials contain asbestos, the fibers can be released into the air and the person performing the work is at risk of breathing in those fibers. These microscopic fibers almost resemble little fish hooks and can get into the lungs (specifically the alveolar sacs in the lungs) where they can remain indefinitely and cause scarring of the lungs (asbestosis) and a host of other health issues, such as pleurisy or mesothelioma, an almost always fatal form of cancer.

Due to these health risks, the use of asbestos in products has drastically declined since the late 1970's as more and more asbestos mine workers, manufacturers, and



other people exposed to large amounts of asbestos and asbestos containing materials (ACMs) developed these conditions and diseases. Although all of the asbestos mines in the United States have been shut down, it continues

to be mined in Russia and other foreign countries. You might also be surprised to learn that even though most manufacturers stopped using asbestos in many products, there are still some out there that produce and sell ACMs because asbestos has not been banned from the United States.



Asbestos has not been banned in the United States.

HOW TO IDENTIFY & REMOVE ACMs

Now armed with the knowledge of what asbestos is and the damage it can do, how do you identify and get rid of it? First, consider the age of the building structure. Age is certainly taken into consideration when determining whether or not it may have been built using ACMs. However, the only way to be certain that no ACMs will be disturbed during a renovation or demolition project is to have an asbestos inspection performed by a state certified asbestos inspector.

The inspectors on our Environmental Services team can identify and take samples of suspect materials which are then sent to an accredited lab for testing. If ACMs are present, they will then need to be removed safely and disposed of properly to minimize the risk of exposure to all involved in the renovation or demolition project. Nabholz is equipped with the proper tools and, most importantly, the people who possess the knowledge and skills to safely identify and remove ACMs to significantly decrease the risk of exposure.

*Questions? Contact
Xavier Nehus at
501.217.5506.*