

Cladding
To Tim Conlon
Building Supervisor
Technical Services

From Tony Lawlor
Health and Safety Consultant

Cladding on Ward Blocks

I took away a piece of the cladding yesterday for examination. Your staff had expressed concern at its possible asbestos content and the risks that might be associated with maintenance on it

At my request the Central Laboratory in the ESB have examined the cladding. This is an internationally accredited laboratory and carries out analyses of asbestos in materials and in the atmosphere. It carries out fiber counts for asbestos processes.

The cladding was analysed on 22 Oct and the findings show that it contained asbestos. It is chrysotile (white asbestos) and it makes up about 15% of the material. It is well bonded in cement and, in its present condition, showing no signs of being friable, it is not likely to generate any level of harmful respirable asbestos fibers in the atmosphere, if left undisturbed

I would recommend that the cladding on the buildings should be left in place and undisturbed

There is a risk of generating respirable fibers when removing or working on the material for maintenance purposes. If reasonable precautions are taken, those carrying out such work will not be exposed to harmful levels of asbestos fibers.

The international codes recommend that the following precautions should be taken when working on materials which contain asbestos and are dust suppressed (as this material is):

1. When removing a panel, try to remove without breaking it up.
2. If it is necessary to cut, drill or break the material
 - do so in open air,
 - use hand tools only,
 - wear the recommended filtering face piece dust mask
 - wear disposable overalls and cap (and dispose of them when job is completed)
3. The waste disposal authority will probably accept waste cladding for disposal in landfill sites if it is in small quantities.

Tony Lawlor
23-Sep-98

