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## TRAINING UPDATE

### What is Training?

The Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities has coordinated development of a “training” program for Type 3 Asbestos Removal. Type 3 removal involves friable asbestos, the stuff that flies through the air and is, therefore, the most dangerous in terms of causing asbestosis and mesothelioma – an insidious, fatal cancer whose victim acquired the disease often 20 – 30 years before the symptoms appear.

MTCU has problems with this program. Unlike apprenticeship training and the other programs they develop this one has virtually **no hands-on** components. The program has been developed in response to a new Ministry of Labour regulation which comes into effect in November, 2007. The objective is to make sure workers in asbestos are aware of the health effects and other risks of working with asbestos and the procedures to minimize the dangers.

There is an assumption that the program will be given to workers already in the field – workers who know how use full-face respirators, how remove asbestos-containing material (sometimes including drywall from construction projects before the mid 1980’s), how to bag and transport the asbestos, etc. MTCU can describe these skills, but their commission was to develop a **curriculum** focused on **knowledge not skills**. It is assumed that workers taking the test based on this curriculum can already do the work, i.e., already have the hands-on skills.

MTCU is not comfortable with this.

However, for many trades and activities in construction, the knowledge component of training is increasing in importance. Although skills are still paramount, more and more often written tests on related knowledge are required as well as demonstration of hands-on skills.

For example, equipment operators must not only be able to operate the machines but to be “competent persons” according to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, they must be **knowledgeable** about the relevant provisions of the Act and Regulations under the Act, and often have to understand load charts or how to calculate loads – and usually have to pass tests to demonstrate that they have this knowledge.

This increasing emphasis on knowledge means that increasing amounts of training time have to be spent in classrooms, even though instructors and trainees usually prefer doing to studying. Training has to involve both knowledge and skills.