

**March 17, 2017**

***This message is being sent on behalf of Trevor Young, Dean, Faculty of Medicine.***

**Please ensure that this is distributed to all MSB faculty, staff and students in your unit, as before.**

To MSB faculty, staff and students:

I'm writing to you as there is a great deal of concern regarding asbestos. This is the first of a weekly update that I encourage you to share.

I understand that there are many concerns about asbestos testing, your health and the health of those around you. I want to assure you that our FOM community is working with our colleagues across the University to address these concerns.

Firstly, U of T Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) has hired a third party consultant, who will act as an additional resource throughout our assessments and answer occupant queries. One lab remains closed; once we are notified by EHS that the space has been inspected and cleared for occupancy, we will let you know.

Secondly, starting next week, EHS has committed to make staff available onsite at MSB; hours will be confirmed. As well, EHS is putting together a list of Frequently Asked Questions, which we will post and add to as needed, to offer additional context and facts around asbestos and U of T's abatement procedures.

Thirdly, following up on emails from Scott Mabury and myself, Rick Hegele and Tim Neff (on March 8, 9 and 14 respectively) summarizing incidents and testing procedures, I want to step back and ensure we clearly communicate what we know:

Current MSB construction is part of a major renovation under the Lab Innovation for Toronto (LIFT) project announced by the University, federal and provincial officials last summer. Beginning in late November 2016, asbestos abatement and demolition began on five separate sites in MSB.

By early February, four of the LIFT construction sites were completed and one site remained under construction. Occupants reported unusual dust in their 6<sup>th</sup> floor lab, adjacent to the remaining construction site.

Immediately upon notification, U of T's Hazardous Construction Materials Group and EHS were advised, attended, took samples and closed the lab (6360). Test results February 1 confirmed asbestos in the dust; the lab and its contents were then cleaned, and the labs were cleared for re-occupancy within days. Inspections of rooms also connected to the site revealed two other labs with asbestos-containing dust (7366 and 7368). These were also cleaned and cleared for occupancy by EHS.

At that time, additional testing and controls were put in place for the remainder of the abatement work. Hazardous Construction Materials Group determined that this *appeared to be an isolated incident as there was no other active abatement in the building at that time.*

Unusual dust was again reported on February 24 in an area *completely unconnected to the first incident*; again Hazardous Construction Materials Group and EHS closed the lab (6334); when test results confirmed asbestos in the dust, the lab was cleaned and EHS cleared the lab for re-occupancy. When dust recurred in the same lab, it and two lab support rooms were closed on March 7 while further testing was conducted.

I know that the University takes this issue extremely seriously and has and will continue to take steps to mitigate any possible risks to health and safety. I can also update you on the following:

- Consistent with industry standard methodologies and the University's best practices to sample air quality related to applicable asbestos work, all air quality samples taken throughout the construction period and in the affected rooms have been well below the occupational exposure limit for asbestos.
- A third party contractor is continuing to sample air quality in MSB, one floor/day, which will extend until the entire building is sampled. As noted earlier this week, the results of those tests are available by emailing (with a UTORid) your request to [ehs.office@utoronto.ca](mailto:ehs.office@utoronto.ca); all of these recent air tests to date have also been well below the occupational exposure limit for asbestos. I will summarize these findings in my weekly update. Air quality testing will also continue during all abatement projects.
- If you see unusual dust, do not clean it up. Notify your department chair, business officer or supervisor; EHS will be informed and tests will be conducted.

Please know that the health and safety of our FOM community are paramount. Individual health questions or concerns may be brought to an occupational health physician through EHS; please contact [yangting.shek@utoronto.ca](mailto:yangting.shek@utoronto.ca) and she can help you access those resources.

We've had many small group meetings – and will continue to reach out to share information and address concerns across our community. There are more upgrades planned for MSB and we are working with the University to ensure all future projects are conducted in the safest possible way.

Sincerely,  
Trevor Young  
Dean, Faculty of Medicine