



**SHINE Program
Superfund Health Investigation & Education
Former Burns Air Force Radar Station Public Health
Consultation (PHC)
Summary Fact Sheet- April 2003**

The Oregon SHINE Program evaluated the public health significance of exposure to asbestos at the former Burns Air Force Radar Station near the cities of Burns and Hines in Harney County. The people that may be affected by the asbestos and physical hazards are mainly trespassers and maintenance workers at the site.

SHINE concluded that exposure to friable asbestos and physical hazards created by the vandalism of old buildings at the site poses a public health hazard. The physical hazards at the site include open sewer manholes and open pits, buildings with collapsed beams and roofing, and broken window glass. Some sources of asbestos at the site are insulation, pipe wrap, and broken tile and wallboard.

The EPA has determined that there is no safe level of exposure to asbestos. People are mainly exposed to asbestos through breathing in microscopic fibers in the air. The more fibers a person is exposed to, the greater the risk of developing an asbestos-related health condition. Asbestos is known to cause cancer and other health effects, and smoking acts with asbestos to increase the risk of lung cancer.

Certain behaviors increase the health risk associated with this site. Teens and others using the site as a hangout may suffer from excess exposure to asbestos from going into buildings and/or disturbing materials.

A copy of the Public Health Consultation (PHC) can be accessed at www.healthoregon.org/superfund or at the Harney County Public Library, 80 West D Street.

What can I do to reduce my family's health risks from exposure to asbestos?

- Keep your family away from the former Burns Air Force Station
- If you have accessed the site in the past and you are a smoker, stop smoking
- Get health checkups from a doctor experienced with asbestos-related disease
- Ask your doctor for advice on receiving vaccines against flu and pneumonia
- Get prompt attention from your doctor for any respiratory illness
- Learn more about how to avoid asbestos exposure from the Environmental Protection Agency, the American Cancer Society and the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry

What does the PHC say about the former Burns Air Force Station?

- Trespassers and maintenance workers are exposed to friable asbestos and physical hazards at the site
- Signs have been posted, but the buildings are accessed by area teens and others
- There may be additional contamination at two former disposal sites and in soil at the radome building

For more information, please call staff from the SHINE Program:

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