

MEMORANDUM

December 20, 2006

TO: ASBESTOS REGULATED COMMUNITY

FROM: ROBIN MACK, MANAGER ASBESTOS SECTION

RE: **Variations related to Pre-Demolition Abatement and Critical Barriers**

SCDHEC Regulation 61-86.1 stipulates that for a variance to be granted, a case of need must be established. Specifically, the applicant must show that compliance with the written standard is neither practical nor feasible for a given project. In addition, the applicant must provide alternatives that will grant the same level of protection as the standard work practices.

Since 1996, the SCDHEC Regulation 61-86.1 has required the use of standard work practices for abatements that precede a demolition to include the establishment of a fully contained work area. Prior to this, the regulations had allowed the use of critical barriers in place of a full containment for those abatements performed prior to a demolition.

The changes to the regulation were made after the Department determined that the less stringent pre-demolition work practices were being abused. Some projects were misrepresented as pre-demolition abatements when they were not.

Subsequent to the promulgation of the 1996 revision, the Department began to receive variance requests to allow for the use of the critical-barrier work practices for pre-demolition projects. The Department began to issue approvals when a contractor could provide verification that the abatement was being performed prior to a demolition activity. Since that time, variance approvals for such situations has become standard.

The Department has determined that since the current SC DHEC Regulation 61-86.1 does not require any clearance air monitoring for abated buildings which will not be reoccupied by unprotected persons prior to demolition, that the use of critical barriers alone does not provide sufficient protection during abatement activities. Also, it has been the experience of the Department that many buildings continue to be submitted as pre-demolition abatements when the demolition date for a building has not even been established. There have been many instances where the abatement has been completed, no final air clearance was performed, and yet, the building remained standing (sometimes with the critical barriers left in place) allowing unprotected persons to enter the building. Therefore, the Department cannot justify continuing the practice of allowing critical only pre-demolition abatements.

Henceforth, the Department will no longer entertain or approve the variance requests discussed in this memorandum. If you have any questions, please contact the Asbestos Section at 803-898-4289.