

HSE investigating supply to schools of metal gauze mats which contain asbestos

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has been made aware that two UK laboratory supply companies have supplied schools and potentially other users with gauze mats which contain asbestos. The metal gauze mats are designed for use over Bunsen burners.

A HSE spokesperson said:

“While we assess the overall risk of exposure to be low, we have taken swift action. We have ensured that both of the supply companies concerned immediately ceased supply of the gauze mats and are overseeing arrangements to contact affected customers and provide precautionary advice on how the mats should be disposed of safely.

“We are working closely with Department for Education, education departments in Scotland and Wales as well as CLEAPSS (Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services). This will help us ensure that schools, colleges, local regulators, and others who may have supplied or purchased similar products are directed to our advice.

“We are also investigating how these particular gauze mats came into circulation. Breaches of the restrictions on the supply of asbestos are taken very seriously by HSE.”

About HSE

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. www.hse.gov.uk