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KNOWING THE HAZARDS

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When contractors and recyclers know both their obligations and their options, dealing with hazardous materials can be less intimidating.

THE ASBESTOS SCENE

Tony Nocito of ABCOV Inc., New York, provided an overview of his company's process to convert asbestos to a non-hazardous material with a different fiber structure.

Nocito said the process offers those wishing to dispose of asbestos an alternative to bagging it and taking it to landfills, or "bag, tag and store," as Nocito called it. Nocito warned that those who have sent asbestos to landfills in such a way may yet face potentially responsible party (PRP) problems should those landfills ever cause future environmental problems.

While asbestos is now less commonly used by the building industry, demolition contractors often still encounter it.

Nocito told C&D Recycling Forum attendees that asbestos was formerly used in fireproofing products, electrical insulation, chemical filters, other building materials including some cement products, and vehicle brake linings.

Most demolition contractors have had experience with asbestos, and many have started asbestos abatement divisions to their companies. But for those less familiar with asbestos, or who would prefer to leave the work to another company, Nocito advised:

- It is always best to leave asbestos alone; it's usually safe unless it's damaged or disturbed.
- The best way to deal with damaged material is to limit access to the area and not disturb it. Check with local health, environmental, or other appropriate officials to find out proper handling and disposal procedures.
- Do not attempt to remove asbestos without using a licensed contractor who can safely remove the asbestos.

Nocito said the ABCOV process (www.abcov.com) complies with CERCLA (the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act) and offers these advantages:

- permanently destroys all six forms of asbestos found in asbestos-containing material;
- allows secondary hazardous and mixed wastes to be treated and stabilized;
- incorporates proven, commercially available and reliable equipment;
- can be modular and transportable or it can operate from a fixed base; and
- can be scalable to meet a customer's needs.

There is even a recycling aspect to the process, said Nocito, in that converted asbestos can be used for landfill cover, as an additive to concrete, in roadbed material and in other applications.