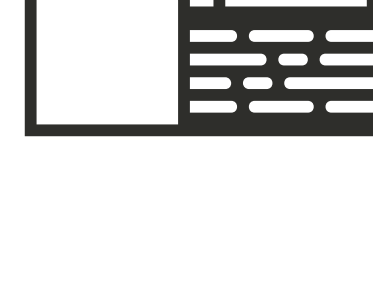


TOOLBOX TALKS



COAL TAR AWARENESS

WHAT?

Coal Tar was used as a binder in road construction up until the early 1980's. It is now wholly replaced with bitumen. Coal Tar was a by-product from town gas manufacture. Bitumen is a by-product from crude oil refining. The two binders are chemically different. Unlike bitumen, coal tar is carcinogenic, that is to say it can cause cancer. For this reason, when excavated it is classed as Hazardous Waste (Special waste in Scotland) if the levels of carcinogens exceed 0.1% by weight.

It can sometimes be identified by its characteristic smell, which is like creosote, and its colour which is often darker black than bitumen. It is not soluble in white spirit. Bitumen however will slowly dissolve to form a dark brown liquid.

It is most likely to be found in older carriage ways and footpaths, often covered with more recent bitumen based roadstone.

If presence of coal tar is suspected, it will require laboratory testing to confirm its presence.



WHY?

MINIMISE POTENTIAL HARM:

Coal tar is hazardous to health and may lead to environmental harm.

AVOID PROSECUTION:

Disposal of hazardous waste at an unlicensed facility may lead to fines and clean up costs.

DO

Regularly check materials being excavated for unusual smells, colours or textures.

If coal tar is suspected report to your line manager as soon as possible.

Stockpile any suspect materials on a thick gauge plastic sheet in a safe location and cover with a tarpaulin.

Arrange for samples to be taken and analysed at a suitable laboratory who hold UKAS accreditation for coal tar analysis.

If handling suspected materials, put on appropriate PPE – chemical resistant gloves. If cutting use respiratory protection.

Protect sensitive areas (e.g. watercourses or surface water drains – use drain covers or use earth/sand to construct a bund).

Dispose of all coal tar contaminated materials as hazardous / special waste. Ensure any coal tar containing materials are taken to a suitably licensed site.

Notify your line manager of actions taken.

DON'T

DON'T ignore it!
STOP WORK and **ACT immediately**.

DON'T allow suspected coal tar containing materials to be moved from site or disposed of until laboratory test results are available.

DON'T allow coal tar containing materials to be moved on the road unless a Hazardous/Special Waste Consignment Note has been completed prior to movement.

DON'T allow coal tar to be heated, its fumes are hazardous.

TOOLBOX TALKS



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS CONTACT **YOUR SHEQ DEPARTMENT**