

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

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SUBJECT: Hard Plaster/Gypsum Board System Sampling

It is imperative that surveyors procure bulk samples in a manner adequate to obtain the entire depth of each layer of suspect materials. Hard plaster samples should be procured using a coring tool. The coring tool should penetrate entire base coat; surveyor should be able to identify substrate of the plaster system at each sample location. There are several potential consequences if the entire depth of each layer is not procured properly (especially for those materials containing a small percentage of asbestos): asbestos content of a given sample may be misreported since lab result will reflect the findings over a portion of given layer instead of the entire layer; or presence of asbestos may be missed all together since asbestos is often times reported as not being consistently distributed throughout the entire sample; or an entire suspect layer may be missed since the substrate itself can sometimes be a suspect material (e.g., we have found hard plaster base coats installed over an asbestos cement board substrate).

Due to problems we have had with labs differentiating the layers of many of our samples, gypsum board samples should now be put in a vial separate from the associated compound samples. Hard plaster layers can still be put into one vial; however, if the layers are not easily distinguishable they should be separated as well (e.g., if the finish breaks up into several tiny pieces and becomes intermingled with the base coat, then the labs have had difficulty separating the small finish fragments from the base coat).

Both offices now have 2 cordless HEPA equipped vacuums for use on surveys. Additionally, the Columbus office has the standard electric portable HEPA vacuum which can be used. All surveyors should be using these vacuums for cleaning up areas following bulk sampling activities (especially following sampling of plaster and gypsum board systems). Please make sure these vacuums are returned to the office after each use so everyone has the opportunity to use them. While we don't want to spend money needlessly, let us know if an additional cordless vacuum would be helpful.

We understand that all surveyors have been issued hard plaster coring tools; if your coring tool has been lost or broken, please notify NH so it can be replaced.

END OF BULLETIN