Asbestos Abatement and Fireproofing Respray Projects

A Case Study Shows That They Require Flexibility under Demanding Conditions

(Editor’s Note: The following article is based on information provided by Isolatek International. Due to the nature of the project, the exact location of the project is not provided. It provides an excellent case study describing some of the challenges that can be faced in such a renovation project. Reader response is welcome.)

Asbestos abatement projects can pose a series of challenges for a subcontractor. Because of the public’s negative perception and fear of asbestos, building owners demand that discretion be the rule of conduct. At the same time, however, the majority of these jobs are performed while the building is occupied. Most abatement jobs are done one floor at a time, although not necessarily in consecutive floor sequence.

For abatement subcontractors these mandates translate into excessive movement of machinery, limited access to elevators, strict attention to maintaining the cleanliness of a work area, the need for proper ventilation, lack of tolerance of unfamiliar odors and limited amounts of storage space, power and water. The necessary removal of building components such as ceiling grids and panels, ductwork and possibly electrical and plumbing fixtures is a further complication.

Many of the older buildings in New York City’s financial district are currently undergoing asbestos abatement renovations. One recent project involved the respraying of fireproofing materials on 55,000-square-foot-per-floor areas in an occupied tower in the heart of this district. Asbestos

A closeup of the floor/ceiling structure that has been resprayed with Cafco Blaze-Shield fireproofing.
abatement subcontractor Steven Alessio, Vice President of American Spray-On Corporation, New York, New York, was given a tough set of rules by the building owners. They insisted that disturbance to tenants be kept to an absolute minimum. No fumes could be given off, and application had to be performed using low-noise installation machines.

In addition, Mr. Alessio had to conform to budgetary and labor restrictions. The product chosen had to be applied without disturbance to existing ductwork and sprinkler systems, be cost and labor effective, and lend itself to easy cleanup. Using UL-classified Cafo® Blaze-Shield® fireproofing from Isolatek International, American Spray-On was able to get the job done on time and exactly as specified.

Precise delivery of materials was critical. In order to keep the job discreet, Isolatek made Sunday deliveries of Blaze-Shield. Spray application made hard-to-reach areas immediately

After removal of all existing asbestos, Cafo Blaze-Shield fireproofing was spray-applied to the exposed structural steel of the steel beams, columns, and ceilings. 1700 bags of this fireproofing product were needed to complete the project which involved the respraying of 55,000-square-foot-per-floor areas.
accessible and was easily performed using lightweight electrically powered low-noise machines. Just one application was needed, thus saving time and allowing for quicker job completion.

Because Blaze-Shield is a dry-mix product, it requires little water and, therefore, less drying time. This is crucial in abatement and other retrofit projects, especially in buildings which have limited ventilation. Blaze-Shield’s one coat application and minimal drying time eliminates the need for an accelerator additive. In older buildings, Cafco Blaze-Shield will bring fire ratings up to current standards and can also be used to correct many other existing problems in the areas of insulation and acoustical control.

Isolatek International, headquartered in Netcong, New Jersey, is the exclusive marketer of Cafco-brand fireproofing products. The company is committed to working closely with abatement contractors to provide products and services when and where they are needed. Blaze-Shield is certified asbestos-free and non-combustible. Fire endurance tests resulted in ratings of up to four hours for floor/ceiling, beam, column, and wall and partition constructions.

Said Mr. Alessio, “Blaze-Shield allowed us to get the job done with a minimum amount of disruption. No pre-mixing of products was necessary; application was quick and easy. And we didn’t have to erect scaffolds. By using pole guns, we covered the area with equal effectiveness and eliminated the need for additional manpower. These time and labor-saving benefits make Blaze-Shield one of the least expensive fireproofing products on the market.”

For more information contact Isolatek International, P.O. Box 478, Flanders Road, Netcong, NJ 07857.