

## Possibility of Asbestos in Flooring Forces Closure of DEQ Bend Office

*by Bend Weekly News Sources*

Closed until further notice pending evaluation by asbestos abatement contractor

Asbestos found in flooring material removed during the current renovation of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Bend Office has forced the closure of the facility at 2146 NE Fourth St. until further notice, the agency announced Thursday.

During the removal of the flooring, part of a renovation project begun after a Dec. 1 fire in the building, asbestos fibers may have been released to the air. An Oregon licensed asbestos abatement contractor has been hired to perform air monitoring and, if necessary, the next steps required for safe removal of any asbestos-containing material.

During the closure, anyone needing to do business by phone with the Bend DEQ office is asked to call (800) 452-4011 or (800) 304-3513, toll-free. All calls, including those to the local Bend office phone number, will be rerouted to appropriate Bend office staff and returned by cell. Staff is monitoring voice messages remotely.

Asbestos fibers are a respiratory hazard proven to cause lung cancer, mesothelioma, asbestosis and other respiratory diseases and are a hazardous air contaminant for which there is no known safe level of exposure. Removing asbestos-containing flooring can render it friable, or capable of releasing asbestos fibers.

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