

Email from 19th February 2016: Harmful substances / Precautionary health measures

Dear Staff Members,

The Bau- und Liegenschaftsbetrieb (BLB) NRW as the owners and head of the modernisation have informed the University of a possible new source of harmful substances. During the first phase of modernisation an analysis of a composite sample of filler and putty from the plasterboard revealed asbestos fibres. The origin of the asbestos fibres is not yet explained.

The putty was also tested in 2008, along with other building materials in an extensive investigation into possible harmful substances. At this time no trace of asbestos was found, the existence of which would have compelled the expert at this time to carry out further tests.

The current results therefore do not concur with the earlier conclusions and have to be explained. The Bau- und Liegenschaftsbetrieb (BLB) and the University are at present planning further tests with external experts. These will soon be carried out in the areas affected by first phase of modernisation as well as the remaining university building. In its present condition the putty does not pose any health risks as it is built into the wall. **Until the experts have found a clear explanation I have to draw your attention to the following points for the reasons of health and safety:**

- Please do not carry out independent work on the walls (e.g. drilling holes, removing drilled-in screws etc.).
- Smaller holes, such as those made by nails or drawing pins present no health risks (after an evaluation of independent experts on harmful substances (Gesamtverband Schadstoffsanierung) and experts of the BLB).
- The Department Facility Management has postponed any work required for relocation or refurbishment until the situation has been clarified. I apologise for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience and understanding. If you have any concerns please contact the Facility Management who would be happy to discuss these with you (email: service-pb@uni-bielefeld.de).

If you have any further questions you can contact AGUS, the university sub department for work, health and environment: www.uni-bielefeld.de/agus.

On the webpages www.uni-bielefeld.de/asbest (in German) you will find basic information on the theme of harmful substances as well as a list of frequently asked questions.

I will keep you informed of any new developments on this subject.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Stephan Becker
Chancellor