- **ALWAYS** ensure the ACM is thoroughly wet down and kept wet during your work to minimise the release of asbestos fibres and/or dust
- **FOLLOW** the correct procedures for decontamination as outlined in the codes of practice
- **USE ONLY** specialised Class H vacuum cleaners with HEPA filters for cleaning up fibres.

For more information, contact the work health and safety regulator in your state or territory.

For further information

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency
www.asbestossafety.gov.au

National Association of Testing Authorities
www.nata.com.au

SafeWork Australia
www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au

Some photos in this document are courtesy of Asbestos Audits Queensland

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

The agency was established on 1 July 2013 to provide a national focus on asbestos issues which goes beyond workplace safety to encompass environmental and public health concerns. The agency aims to ensure asbestos issues receive the attention and focus needed to drive change across all levels of government.

This brochure was developed with the assistance of the Building, Construction and Demolition Sectors Committee established by the agency.

@AsbestosSafety

Asbestos-Safety-and-Eradication-Agency

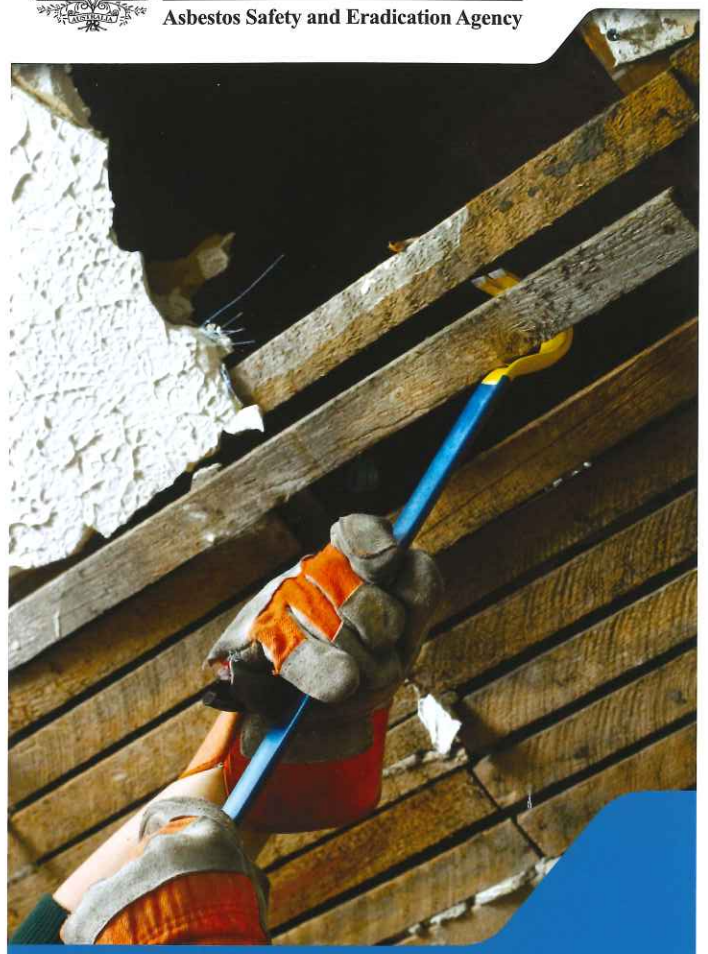
www.asbestossafety.gov.au

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

AUSTRALIAN CONSTRUCTORS ASSOCIATION

CFMEU CONSTRUCTION

Australian Government
Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency



Asbestos awareness information for the general construction industry

ASEA | November 2018

Basic safety

Keep a cartridge half face mask (P2) and some additional paper (P2) disposable masks on hand in your toolbox as backups which you can dispose of appropriately later. Ideally, you should be clean shaven to ensure the mask fits properly and does not leak.

Keep some important equipment in your work vehicle like a water spray bottle (with PVA glue mixture), disposable overalls, gloves, a 200 micron thick plastic bag and duct tape to seal the waste material. That way you are not leaving the asbestos-containing waste lying around to cause the next person to be exposed to dangerous asbestos fibres.

Try not to give in to the "she'll be right this time" mindset in order to get a job done faster. Even though the asbestos fibres that can harm you are invisible to the human eye, they are there and you can easily take them home with you to your family!

If you have to handle or work with asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), it is important to remember:

- **DO NOT** use power tools
- **DO NOT** use abrasive cutting or sanding discs
- **DO NOT** use compressed air high-pressure water hose or brooms to sweep the waste up
- **DO NOT** walk on corrugated asbestos-cement roofs as you may run the risk of falling through
- **DO NOT** leave ACMs where they may be broken or crushed allowing fibres to escape into the air or into the environment
- **DO NOT** cover it over as this only hides it which could result in someone accidently cutting into it
- **DO NOT** move plant and equipment from one site to another without proper decontamiation
- **DO** get the material tested by a NATA-accredited laboratory if you are unsure if it contains asbestos

Anyone working in the construction industry can be exposed to asbestos in a wide range of areas from fences and roofing to ceiling panels and floor coverings. Other countries still manufacture building products with asbestos and there have been cases of those materials being imported into Australia over time.

Where is asbestos found in the typical Australian home?

You should familiarise yourself with common asbestos materials and where they are typically found. The following examples show some of the common asbestos materials found in Australian homes. It is important to note that these examples should not be taken as an exhaustive list.

How do I know whether something contains asbestos?

It is not possible to determine whether a material contains asbestos simply by looking at it. The only way to be sure is to get a sample of the material tested.

It is recommend that testing is undertaken by a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratory where possible. These laboratories can be found listed on their website at www.nata.com.au .

It is also recommended that you engage an experienced professional to take samples of suspected asbestos material for you. If you are going to take samples yourself, it is important that you first familiarise yourself with the steps and safety requirements outlined in the guidance available at **www.asbestossafety.gov.au/identification-and-testing/asbestos-sampling-and-testing** or refer to the *Model Code of Practice - How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace* published by Safe Work Australia **www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-how-manage-and-control-asbestos-workplace**

What should I do if asbestos is present?

Asbestos material in good condition does not pose a significant health risk, however it should be monitored over time to detect any deterioration or changes in its condition. You must not drill, cut or sand asbestos-containing materials.

Bonded (non-friable) asbestos material greater than 10m^2 needs to be removed by a Class B licenced asbestos removalist. All friable asbestos material must be removed by a Class A licenced asbestos removalist. For a list of licence holders, visit the website of the work health and safety regulator in your state or territory.

Work health and safety laws and regulations in all states and territories require a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) involved in asbestos removal to be a competent person. These laws and regulations also require the PCBU to provide accredited training for their workers involved in asbestos removal. For more information on training, visit www.training.gov.au

What are some of the common building activities I need to take care with?

Asbestos can be in a friable or non-friable form in products. Friable means you can break it up with just your fingers. For example sprayed asbestos insulation or asbestos felt vinyl backing is friable, asbestos cement sheeting or pipe is generally non-friable.

The most hazardous of these are:

- sprayed asbestos insulation
- asbestos pipe lagging
- asbestos insulation or low density board.

Any asbestos-containing material can pose a significant hazard if turned into friable dust which is easily inhaled or ingested through the nose and mouth.

Why is it important to be aware of asbestos when working in the General Construction industry?

Asbestos is a known carcinogen, and inhaling asbestos fibres is associated with diseases including pleural plaques, asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. Even limited or short-term exposure to asbestos fibres can be dangerous.

If a property was built or renovated before 1990 it is likely to contain some form of asbestos material. Due to its prevalence in Australian homes, it is important to know whether the property you are working on contains asbestos and how to avoid disturbing it.

It is important to know whether asbestos is present before you begin work to ensure that it remains undisturbed.