

Asbestos

A home renovator's and tradesperson's
guide for minor work in domestic buildings

Get up to scratch with the facts about asbestos.

Find out how to handle, remove and dispose of it safely and legally in Queensland.

Now it's a whole new ball game



Queensland Government

Acknowledgments

This document was developed by Queensland Health and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (Workplace Health and Safety Queensland) and is based upon an original document titled "Asbestos: A home renovator's guide".

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- Master Builders Queensland
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Disclaimer

The advice in this booklet is a guide only.

It has been designed for "do it yourself" (DIY) homeowners along with tradespeople who are performing minor work on materials containing asbestos in domestic type buildings or similar. While following this advice will minimise the risks of exposure to asbestos in places such as domestic buildings, we cannot guarantee all risks will be eliminated. This is because circumstances will vary depending on the type and condition of the materials containing asbestos and other factors. If you are uncertain about any of the advice in this booklet please contact Queensland Health on 1300 744 636 before starting work.

Tradespeople should contact the Workplace Health and Safety Infoline on 1300 369 915.

References in this booklet to 'law', 'laws', 'specific laws' and similar refer to the *Public Health Act 2005* and the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*.

The information in this booklet has been adapted from the 2005 Health Council publication *Management of asbestos in the non-occupational environment*, the *Public Health Regulation 2005*, the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008*, the 2005 NOHSC *Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in Workplaces*, the 2005 NOHSC *Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos in Workplaces 2nd Edition* and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), United Kingdom

Asbestos

How to play it safe

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What work does this guide apply to?

This guide applies to tradespeople and DIY homeowners carrying out minor work with asbestos containing materials (ACM), in and around buildings such as domestic dwellings, including:

- Maintaining or installing electrical components, e.g. power points, lighting, work on switch boards and electrical meter boards.
- Maintaining or installing walls, roofing, ceilings, flooring.
- Maintaining or installing plumbing.
- Removing less than 10 square metres of bonded asbestos containing material.
- Painting and sealing of asbestos containing material.
- Drilling into asbestos containing material.

This guide does not apply to removing friable asbestos or greater than 10 square metres of bonded ACM, or work on, or removal of, low density asbestos fibre board.

Although initially written for minor works regarding asbestos containing material in domestic buildings, the general advice and safe work methods contained in this guide may be applicable to similar minor works that may be carried out by tradespeople in similar type buildings at workplace locations.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral found in the ground. It contains strong fibres that have excellent durability, fire resistance and insulating properties. Asbestos fibres are 50 to 200 times thinner than a human hair, can float in the air for a long time, can be invisible to the naked eye and can be breathed into the lungs.

In the past, asbestos was mined from the ground and manufactured into many different materials. Materials containing asbestos were very common in the Australian residential building industry between the 1940s and late 1980s before their production stopped.

The use of all forms of asbestos has been banned nationally since 31 December 2003. The ban does not apply to asbestos installed prior to this date (e.g. asbestos materials in houses).



Chrysotile asbestos (white).



Crocidolite asbestos (blue)

What are the possible health effects of asbestos?

Asbestos can cause health effects if fibres are breathed into the lungs. Most fibres are removed from your lungs by your body's natural defences (e.g. by being coughed up and then swallowed); however some fibres can remain in the lungs.

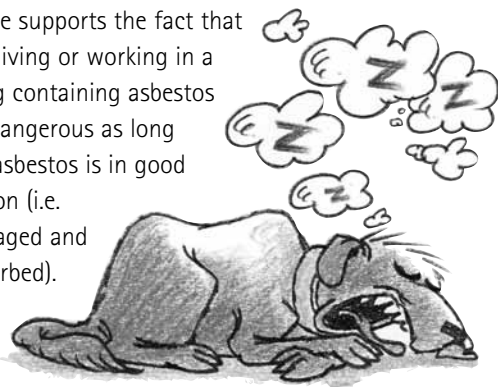
The possible health effects of asbestos are:

- Asbestosis (progressive and irreversible scarring of lung tissue that impairs breathing).
- Lung cancer.
- Mesothelioma, a cancer of the linings around the lungs and abdomen.
- Non-cancerous diseases that affect the linings around the lungs and abdomen (commonly called 'benign pleural diseases').

These diseases can sometimes take up to 50 years to develop. There may be some treatments for asbestos related diseases, but there are currently no known cures. Further general information on asbestos related diseases is available from the Queensland Health website www.health.qld.gov.au.

Is it dangerous?

Current scientific and medical evidence supports the fact that simply living or working in a building containing asbestos is not dangerous as long as the asbestos is in good condition (i.e. undamaged and undisturbed).



If asbestos is in good condition, leave it alone – let sleeping dogs lie!

It is when asbestos is worked with or disturbed, resulting in the release of asbestos fibres, that the risk of developing an asbestos related disease is increased.

While most cases of asbestos related diseases result from sustained workplace exposure, some asbestos related diseases, particularly mesothelioma, can result from brief periods of breathing in asbestos fibres.

To minimise the chance of anyone being exposed to asbestos, it is **very important** that DIY home renovators and tradespeople prevent the release of asbestos fibres into the air.

Before working with or removing a material that contains asbestos you should think about the following:

- If the asbestos material is in good condition (e.g. undamaged), can you leave it alone?
- Have you considered the alternatives to removing the material containing asbestos (e.g. painting or sealing using an appropriate product or covering with a suitable non-asbestos product)?
- Can you comply with the laws and safety procedures for working with asbestos (see page 7)?
- Does the job require the use of a licensed person?

Play it safe with asbestos. If you are not sure whether a material contains asbestos, presume that it does.

The two types of material containing asbestos

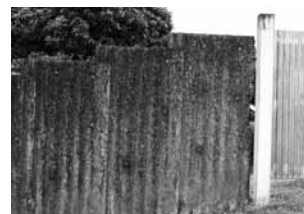
There are two types of material used in housing construction that contain asbestos:

1. Bonded (tightly bound) asbestos

Bonded materials containing asbestos are the most common in domestic houses. They are mainly made up of a bonding compound (such as cement), with up to 15 per cent asbestos. Bonded materials containing asbestos are solid, quite rigid and the asbestos fibres are tightly bound in the material. They are commonly called 'fibro', 'asbestos cement' and 'AC sheeting'.



Flat sheet cladding



Super six roof sheeting used as fence panelling



Hardi plank wall cladding



Slotted hardi flex soffit sheeting

Asbestos vinyl tiles can be found in houses. Asbestos vinyl tiles contain 8–30 per cent asbestos in a tightly bonded matrix. They do not have a 'backing' and are usually glued directly to the floor. It should be noted that glue used to adhere the asbestos vinyl tiles to the floor may also contain asbestos.

Work on bonded ACM asbestos should only be performed in accordance with the safe work methods outlined on pages 11–18. Where 10m² or more of bonded asbestos containing material is to be removed, and the asbestos remains in a bonded state, it must only be removed by an A or B Class certificate holder. (See page 8 for more information on certificates).

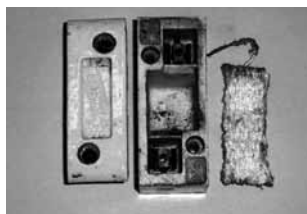
2. Loosely bound (friable) asbestos

Loosely bound (friable) materials containing asbestos are not commonly found in domestic houses. They were primarily used in commercial and industrial settings for fire proofing, sound

proofing and insulation. However, they can be found in some old domestic heaters, stoves, hot water systems and associated pipe lagging and in the backing of vinyl and linoleum floor coverings, inside air conditioning ducts, inside fire places, inside cavity brick walls for duplexes and units, fire doors in the main entry doors of units and stairwells and sprayed vermiculite in common areas of unit blocks.

Friable materials can be made of up to 100 per cent asbestos. They are quite loose and can be turned to dust with very light pressure, such as crushing with your hand.

Loosely bound friable materials containing asbestos are potentially very dangerous. This is because the asbestos fibres can get into the air very easily. **They must only be handled and removed by an asbestos removalist with an 'A' Class certificate** (see page 8 for more information on certificates).



Textile wadding used in the porcelain fuse holders



Millboard lining to an air conditioning duct, also used in switchboards and hot water system units

How do I know if a house contains asbestos?

It can be difficult to tell whether a house has materials containing asbestos in it just by looking.

As a general rule, if a house was built:

- Before the mid 1980s, it is **highly likely** that it would have some materials containing asbestos.
- Between the mid 1980s and 1990, it is **likely** that it would have materials containing asbestos.
- After 1990, it is **highly unlikely** it would have materials containing asbestos.

If you are not sure whether a material contains asbestos, play it safe and presume that it does. Alternatively, you can get advice from an asbestos consultant or a competent person (e.g. a tradesperson with experience with asbestos) or get the material **tested by a laboratory** (see page 6).

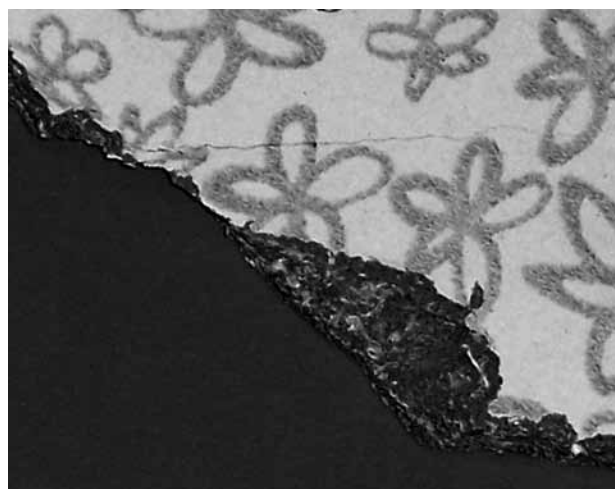
Where could I find materials containing asbestos inside a house?

Bonded materials containing asbestos were often used inside houses for wall sheeting, particularly in 'wet' areas such as the kitchen, bathroom and laundry (e.g. the glazed patterned panels around showers and baths that are held in with screws). They were also used as ceiling sheeting. Asbestos might also be found bonded in plaster patching compounds, and in textured paint and adhesives.

Loosely bound materials containing friable asbestos might be found in a few older forms of insulation used in domestic heaters and stoves. Asbestos-felt was used as a backing for many vinyl and linoleum sheet and carpet floorings and does not pose a health risk while it remains undisturbed. When floor coverings are damaged or removed the material becomes loose and it becomes a high health risk.

If you are planning on removing these materials and you are unsure if it is asbestos-free, consider leaving it alone, seeking advice from an asbestos consultant or getting it **tested by a laboratory** (see page 6). Asbestos-felt vinyl flooring and other forms of loose asbestos must only be removed by an asbestos removal business that holds an 'A' Class certificate.

Asbestos insulation was not routinely used in residential buildings, although there have been isolated cases in New South Wales and the ACT. Loosely-bound friable asbestos was generally used in commercial buildings and industrial workplaces.



Tilux bathroom wall sheeting in a springtime pattern also used as splashbacks over sinks

Where could I find materials containing asbestos outside a house?

Externally, bonded materials containing asbestos were commonly used for roof sheeting and capping, guttering, gables, eaves/soffits, water pipes and flues, DT surrounds (disconnecter trap surrounds), wall sheeting (flat or a weatherboard style), zelimite backing boards to the switchboards, flexible building boards and imitation brick

cladding. Bonded materials containing asbestos have also been used for fencing and building car ports and sheds, water and storm water pipes, waterproofing membrane, telecommunications pits and expansion joints.

Bonded materials containing asbestos are the most common asbestos materials in domestic houses. They are not dangerous if they are in good condition (i.e. undamaged) and remain undisturbed. Loosely bound materials containing friable asbestos was not designed for use on the outside of houses.

Image courtesy of Dept of Human Services, Victoria



External cladding containing asbestos.



Super six roof sheeting used as fence panelling



Zelimite backing board to an external switchboard



Hardiplank wall cladding



Flat sheet stripping used in a woven pattern for a fencing



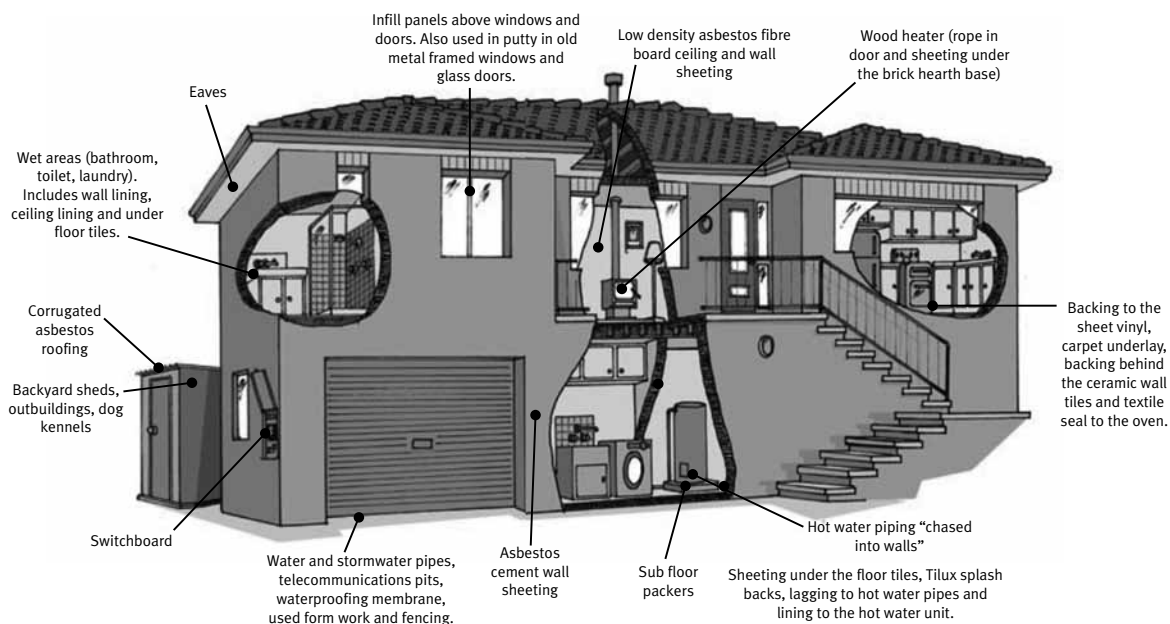
Moulded telecommunications pit



DT surround (disconnecter trap)



Vent pipe



Common locations of materials containing asbestos in a house.

Do new building materials contain asbestos?

New building materials do not contain asbestos. Since 31 December 2003, asbestos and all products containing asbestos have been banned throughout Australia. It is illegal to import, store, supply, sell, install, use or re-use these materials. The ban does not apply to asbestos installed prior to this date (e.g. asbestos in houses).

Asbestos has not been used in domestic building materials since the 1980s. Cellulose fibres are now used instead of asbestos in building materials and non-asbestos fibres, such as glass, are now used in insulation products. However, manufacturers warn that other health effects, such as skin and throat irritation, can still result from the inhalation of dust created when cutting these fibrous building products.

What should I do if I find asbestos in a house?

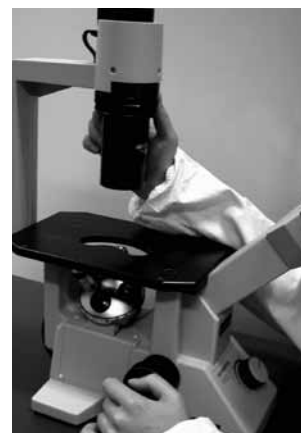
If materials containing asbestos are in the house and are in good condition (i.e. undamaged or undisturbed), the safest option is to leave them alone. In other words, let sleeping dogs lie! If left alone and in good condition, these materials are not dangerous as the asbestos fibres are tightly bound and very few escape into the air over time. Visually inspect the materials from time to time for deterioration and damage.

If you are thinking about working with or removing a material that contains asbestos, you should think about the following:

- Advising any tradespersons about the asbestos or asking them to inspect the premises before commencing any work
- If it is in good condition (e.g. undamaged), can you leave it alone?
- Are you aware of the alternatives to removing the material containing asbestos (e.g. painting or sealing using an appropriate product, covering with a suitable non-asbestos product)?
- Can you comply with the laws and safety procedures for working with asbestos (see page 7)?
- Does the job require the use of a licensed person?

Can I get materials tested for asbestos?

Yes. Laboratories that analyse building materials for asbestos can be found by contacting the National Association of Testing Authorities (Ph. 07 3870 3844, www.nata.asn.au). The laboratories can also give you advice on how to correctly take and send a sample. There will be fees involved. You can also contact an asbestos consultant or competent person for advice. They can be found in the Yellow Pages by searching under 'Asbestos'.



Microscope for identifying asbestos.

Image courtesy of Dept of Human Services, Victoria

What if I accidentally break asbestos?

If you accidentally break a material containing asbestos, the safest way to manage any health risks is to wipe up any dust with a damp cloth or damp paper towel. Place the damp cloth or damp towel inside a plastic bag, tie the bag up and then place this inside a second plastic bag. Tie the final bag up tightly and place into your rubbish bin.

Do not use a normal vacuum cleaner as it cannot filter out all particles and can release more asbestos fibres into the air.



Do not use a normal vacuum cleaner. It cannot filter out all particles and can release more asbestos fibres into the air.

If the material containing asbestos is cracked, you should seal the crack with a product like PVA glue or paint.

If the damage is more significant, the entire sheet should be replaced and the old sheet disposed of correctly. More information on removing a material containing asbestos is on pages 11–18.

What if I need to put a hole in a bonded material containing asbestos?

If it is necessary to put a hole in a bonded material containing asbestos (e.g. for a new window or chimney), it is safer to remove the whole sheet following the safety precautions in this book, replace it with non-asbestos sheeting (e.g. plywood, plasterboard, fibre cement sheeting) and cut the hole in the new sheeting. More information on removing a material containing asbestos is on pages 14–18.

Homeowners or tradespeople: a guide to working with asbestos in a house

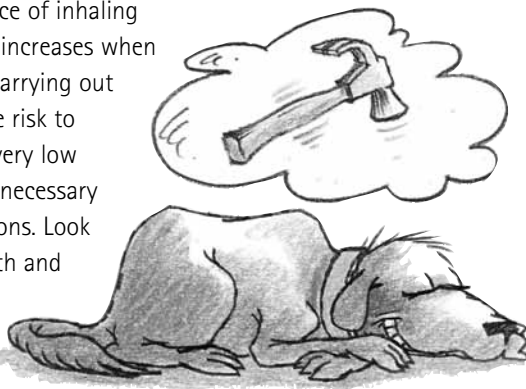
This section provides information about how to legally and safely work with asbestos commonly found in a house.

While the chance of inhaling asbestos fibres increases when renovating or carrying out repair work, the risk to your health is very low if you take the necessary safety precautions. Look after your health and the health of your family, workers and

neighbours by making sure you follow the law and our safety tips whenever you work with asbestos.

Before starting a job with asbestos, whether it is DIY or done by a tradesperson, ask yourself the following questions:

- If the material is in good condition (e.g. undamaged), can you leave it alone?
- Have you considered the alternatives to removing the material containing asbestos (e.g. painting or sealing, covering with a non-asbestos product)?
- Can you comply with the laws and safety procedures for working with asbestos?
- Does the job require a licensed asbestos removalist (e.g. is it friable such as low density asbestos fibre board)?



Things you need to know before every job

In Queensland, there are a number of laws relating to building and renovating. There are also specific laws designed to protect the health of homeowners, their families, the general community and tradespeople by ensuring asbestos is handled, removed and disposed of safely.

There are 10 particular things you need to know before every job you plan to do with asbestos:

1. Check with your local council to see if you need any approvals for your work.
2. Decide how you will dispose of the asbestos waste.
3. Determine whether you need an asbestos removal certificate.
4. Think of those who could be affected by your work (e.g. neighbours, other people in house).
5. Communicate with neighbours.
6. Avoid high risk activities.
7. Plan out the job before you start and purchase your equipment.
8. Protect yourself with appropriate personal protective equipment.
9. Dispose of asbestos waste quickly and correctly.
10. It is illegal to sell or give away asbestos.

More information on these points is provided below.

1. Check with your local council to see if you need approvals for your work

Some renovation activities may require approvals from your local council, such as planning permits and building approvals. Please contact them before starting any work.

2. Decide how you will dispose of the asbestos waste

Your choices are to dispose of the waste yourself if it is a small quantity, otherwise you must employ a licensed waste contractor. If disposing of asbestos waste yourself, it is important to contact your local council to find out its requirements (e.g. how the waste must be packaged, where to take the waste and how much it will cost). You will need to package the waste appropriately to minimise the chance of asbestos fibres getting into the air. More information on waste disposal is in the section 'Disposing of asbestos waste' on page 20.

3. Determine whether you need an asbestos removal certificate

If you are planning to remove up to 10 square metres of bonded materials containing asbestos, you do not require an asbestos removal certificate. However, you will still need to take safety precautions to minimise asbestos fibres getting into the air. Suggested safety precautions for some tasks are on page 10.

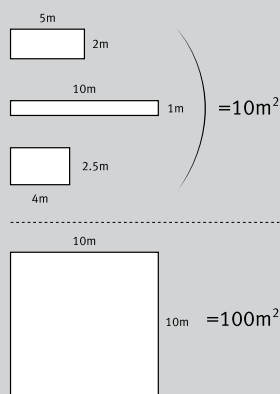
If you are planning on removing 10 square metres or more of bonded materials containing asbestos, you are required to:

- use a business with a current 'A' Class asbestos removal certificate to do the work, or
- use a person with a current 'B' Class asbestos removal certificate
- obtain your own 'B' Class asbestos removal certificate ('A' Class certificates are not available to homeowners)
- if you are planning to remove friable materials containing asbestos, you are required to use a business with a current 'A' Class asbestos removal certificate to do the work.

How do I apply for a 'B' class asbestos removal certificate?

Anyone can apply for a 'B' Class asbestos removal certificate. You will need to attend training and have your knowledge and skills assessed before you are considered competent in the safe removal of bonded asbestos. For more information on certificates, training and fees, contact the Department of Justice and Attorney-General by calling 1300 369 915 or visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au.

IMPORTANT: 10 square metres equals 5 m x 2 m, 4 m x 2.5 m or 10 m x 1 m, but not 10 m x 10 m (this equals 100 square metres!).



As a guide, 10 square metres is equivalent to approximately four sheets of asbestos cement wall sheeting or approximately one wall of a typical bedroom.

Loosely bound materials containing friable asbestos must only be removed by an asbestos removal business with an 'A' Class certificate. Businesses that remove these materials can be found by searching in the Yellow Pages under 'Asbestos removal and/or disposal'. You will need to make sure they hold a current 'A' Class removal certificate issued by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

If you are doing work other than removal (e.g. preparing an asbestos wall for painting, drilling a hole), you do not require a certificate. You will still need to take safety precautions to minimise asbestos fibres getting into the air. Suggested safety precautions are on pages 9–10.

4. Think of those who could be affected by your work

When planning your work, don't forget yourself, other people in the house, family pets and neighbours. Under public health and workplace health and safety laws, you have a responsibility to make sure that you protect their health by not releasing asbestos fibres into the air during your work.

Use disposable clothing such as disposable coveralls and boot covers.



DO NOT TAKE CLOTHING HOME TO BE LAUNDERED AS IT MAY BE CONTAMINATED WITH ASBESTOS.

5. Communicate with neighbours



You should also speak to neighbours about the work you are about to do. It is particularly important to explain the safety precautions you will be taking to minimise the chance of asbestos fibres getting into the air.

6. Avoid high risk activities

There are three particular activities you must never do when working with or removing a bonded material containing asbestos:

1. **Never use power tools, such as angle grinders, circular saws and electric sanders.**
2. **Never use high pressure water blasters.**
3. **Never use compressed air.**

All of these activities are very dangerous because they can release large numbers of asbestos fibres in to the air. **They are illegal. Substantial penalties apply.**



Asbestos cement debris is sprayed everywhere when using a water blaster on asbestos containing material. It's very difficult to contain, would be very expensive for you to clean up and puts you and your neighbours' health at risk.

In addition, avoid unnecessary breakage practices, for example, removing the material using hammers, crow bars, and the like, dropping the material from a height or driving over the material.

7. Plan your job and purchase your equipment

Before starting your work, you will need to plan how you will carry out the job. You will also need to purchase an amount of equipment specific to working with asbestos. Each of the tasks listed later in this booklet detail the minimum equipment you will need. The equipment is available from a variety of stores, including hardware and safety equipment suppliers.

8. Protect yourself

Wearing the right personal protective equipment is essential to protecting your health when working with asbestos. Personal protective equipment is available from most hardware or safety equipment suppliers.

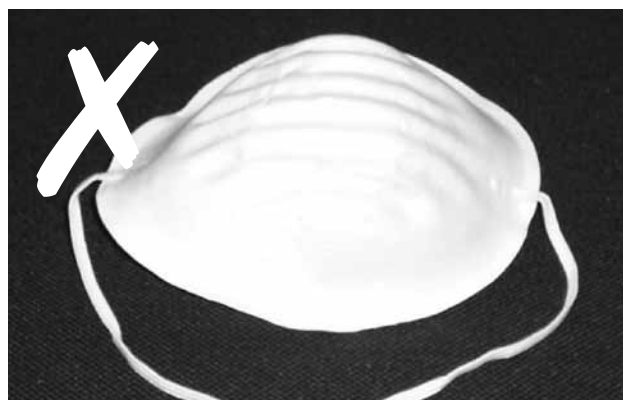


Example of a respirator for working with asbestos.

Image courtesy of Dept of Human Services, Victoria



Example of a disposable P2 respirator, suitable for working with asbestos.



This type of mask does not stop asbestos fibres.

In Queensland, there are laws to protect people's health from asbestos.

- Legal action can be taken against you for working¹ unsafely with asbestos.
- Government officers will investigate complaints and issue notices, on-the-spot-fines or prosecute if you are breaking the law.
- You could also have legal action taken against you by other people, such as a neighbour.

1. 'Working' includes breaking, cleaning, cutting, maintaining, removing, repairing, storing and using. It also includes separating asbestos waste from other waste. Removing includes moving a material containing asbestos from the position where it was already installed.

- **Wear the proper respirator**

Ordinary dust masks are not effective in preventing the inhalation of asbestos fibres and dust. Cheap masks may save dollars but they do not provide adequate protection against airborne asbestos fibres and should be fitted and worn as directed by the manufacturer or supplier.

You will need to purchase and use a specific respirator designed specifically for working with asbestos. Wear a half-face filter respirator fitted with a class P1 or P2 filter cartridge, or a class P1 or P2 disposable respirator appropriate for asbestos.

Respirators should comply with Australian Standard AS1716. This number should be displayed somewhere on the mask.

Males should be clean-shaven to make sure there is a clean seal between their face and the mask. The respirator should have an airtight fit. Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to check the fit of the respirator.

Keep your respirator on until all work and clean up is done and your contaminated clothing has been removed, bagged and sealed.

- **Wear disposable clothing**

Disposable coveralls should be used to prevent the contamination of any clothing, including your shoes/boots. A disposable hat and disposable gloves should also be worn.

After your work is complete, spray your disposable clothing with a light mist of water and remove them. Keep your respirator on when doing this. Do not keep the disposable clothing, do not reuse them and do not shake the dust out of them. Seal all of these in your asbestos waste bags for disposal (contaminated clothing can be disposed of with other asbestos waste). Go to 'Disposing of asbestos waste' on page 20 for more information on disposal.

- **Have a shower afterwards**

To remove any dust and asbestos that may be on your body, have a thorough shower after finishing your work. **Make sure you wash your hair as well.**

8. Dispose of asbestos waste quickly and correctly

You must clean up; package and dispose of all asbestos waste (including scraps and surplus asbestos) as soon as possible after you produce it. No asbestos can be stored or kept for another use. This is to minimise the chance of asbestos fibres being released into the environment and the risk to you, other people and neighbours breathing in the fibres. More information is available on page 20.

10. It is illegal to sell or give away asbestos

Under Queensland law, you cannot sell or give away asbestos. Substantial penalties apply.

Working safely with bonded asbestos containing material

The following pages provide information (safe work methods) on how to safely work with **bonded** materials containing asbestos for the following tasks:

- drilling
- painting or sealing
- removing ceramic tiles from asbestos sheeting
- removing up to 10 square metres of asbestos sheeting

Remember!

- 'B' Class certificates are required for the removal of 10 m² or more of bonded asbestos materials.
- Loosely bound friable asbestos must only be removed by an asbestos removalist with an 'A' Class certificate only.
- Be alert for low density asbestos fibre board that can look like the more common bonded sheeting but is softer, contains more asbestos, and is more dangerous. Advice regarding work on low density asbestos fibre board can be found on page 19
- More information on certificates is on page 8.

Drilling into bonded materials containing asbestos

Important information:

- Asbestos is a hazardous material.
- It is a risk to your health and the health of those around you if asbestos fibres become airborne.
- Plan ahead to avoid disturbing materials containing asbestos.
- Always prevent creating any dust.
- Follow the correct safety procedures.
- Be alert for low density asbestos fibre board – see page 19 for more information.

Caution must be taken when drilling into bonded materials containing asbestos as asbestos fibres can be released into the air. Follow the safety procedures below when drilling vertical and horizontal surfaces:

STEP 1. Get your equipment together

- A hand drill is preferred, but a low-speed battery-powered drill can be used.
- Disposable cleaning rags (e.g. paper, cloth).
- Bucket of water and/or a misting spray bottle.
- Duct tape.
- Sealant (e.g. PVA glue).
- A paste or gel like substance (e.g. wallpaper paste, shaving cream or hair gel).

WARNING!

Never use a high-speed drill on a material containing asbestos.

The high speed of the drill can release asbestos fibres into the air. Only use a hand drill or a low-speed battery powered drill. The use of shadow vacuuming when using a power drill will minimise the release of debris and fibres from the ACM. Shadow vacuuming means the operation of an asbestos vacuum cleaner that is either directly attached to a tool or hand-held by a second worker as close as possible to the source of released asbestos fibres throughout the use of the tool. Domestic vacuum cleaners are unsuitable and should never be used, even if they have a HEPA filter.

- Two 0.2 mm plastic bags for asbestos waste.
- A disposable plastic drop sheet to cover the floor and other surfaces such as furniture and window ledges under where you are drilling.
- A sturdy, disposable cup (e.g. plastic, styrofoam) if working overhead.
- Personal protective equipment – P1 or P2 respirator, disposable coveralls, safety goggles and disposal gloves, hat and shoe protectors.

WARNING!

Check for electrical hazards where you are working and particularly where you are drilling or using water. Ideally, turn off electricity in the area you are working in to prevent electrocution.

STEP 2. Prepare the work area

- Remove all loose and unnecessary items from the work area.
- Restrict entry to the asbestos work areas (e.g. close door or erect barriers).
- Use plastic sheeting secured with duct tape to cover any surface of the work area and use as drop sheets.
- Put on your personal protective equipment.
- Check the fit of your respirator as per the manufacturer's instructions.

STEP 3. Drilling

To drill vertical surfaces (e.g. a wall):

1. Tape the point to be drilled and the exit point (if possible).
2. Cover the drill entry and exit points (if accessible) on the asbestos sheet with a generous amount of thickened substance (e.g. shaving cream).
3. Drill through the paste.
4. If a cable is to be passed through, insert a sleeve to protect the inner edge of the hole.

To drill overhead horizontal surfaces (e.g. a ceiling):

1. Mark the point to be drilled.
2. Cover the drill entry and exit points (if accessible) on the asbestos sheet with a generous amount of thickened substance (e.g. shaving cream).
3. Drill a hole through the bottom of the disposable cup.
4. Fill or line the inside of the cup with the thickened substance.
5. Put the drill bit through the hole in the cup and make sure the drill bit extends beyond the lip of the cup.

6. Align the drill bit with the marked point.
7. Ensure cup is firmly held against the surface to be drilled.
8. Drill through the surface.
9. Remove the cup from the surface and dispose in asbestos waste bag.
10. If a cable is to be passed through, insert a sleeve to protect the inner edge of the hole.

STEP 4. Clean up

Important! Keep your respirator on until all clean up is finished and you have removed your work clothing

- Use damp rags to clean off the paste and debris from the wall and drill bit.
- Seal the cut edges with sealant (e.g. PVA glue, paint or hair spray).
- Carefully roll or fold plastic drop sheeting from the floor or ground, and other surfaces such as furniture, window sills, so any collected dust or debris does not spill.
- If necessary, use damp rags and/or an approved asbestos vacuum cleaner to clean any remaining visibly contaminated sections of the work area. **Do not resoak used rags in the bucket, as this will contaminate the water.** Either fold the rag and use the clean surface or use a new rag.
- Place asbestos debris, used rags, plastic sheeting and other asbestos waste in disposal bags (only half fill the bag – this is to reduce the chance of the bag splitting).
- After the work area is clean, wet down your personal protective equipment and clothing with a light spray of water and place them and all used damp cloths into a disposable bag.
- Before removing the bags from the work area, wipe external surfaces with damp rags to remove any dust and put the used rags in one of the bags.
- Seal all disposal bags with duct tape, place into a second disposal bag and seal again.
- Label all bags with an appropriate warning such as:
CAUTION – ASBESTOS
DO NOT DAMAGE OR OPEN BAG
DO NOT INHALE DUST
CANCER AND LUNG DISEASE HAZARD
- Dispose of asbestos waste at the appropriate waste facility (contact your local Council for more information). See page 20.

Painting or sealing bonded materials containing asbestos

While it's not necessary to seal, paint or clean bonded materials containing asbestos that is in good condition for health reasons, this is sometimes done to extend structural life and improve appearance.

Important information

- Asbestos is a hazardous material.
- It is a risk to your health and the health of those around you if asbestos fibres become airborne.
- Always prevent creating any dust.
- Plan ahead to avoid disturbing materials containing asbestos.
- Follow the correct safety procedures.
- Be alert for low density asbestos fibre board – see page 19 for more information .

Tip:

Sealing or painting should only be carried out on materials that are in good condition. If the material is significantly weathered, damaged or broken, the material should be removed and replaced with a non-asbestos material (e.g. plywood, plasterboard, fibre cement sheeting).

Under no circumstances are materials containing asbestos to be water blasted or dry sanded. This is illegal and substantial on-the-spot fines apply.



It is very dangerous to work on an asbestos roof. Asbestos roofs become very brittle with age and are very slippery when wet. Working at heights also presents a risk of falling. Consider using a business that specialises in asbestos roofs.

STEP 1. Get your equipment together

- Paint brushes, paint rollers or airless spray gun and equipment.
- Sealant/paint.
- Duct tape.
- 0.2 mm thick plastic bags no more than 1200 mm long and 900 mm wide for disposing of asbestos waste.
- 0.2 mm plastic sheeting to be used as drop sheets.
- Disposable cleaning rags (e.g. paper, cloth).
- Bucket of water and spray bottle for misting.
- Personal protective equipment – P1 or P2 respirator, disposable coveralls, safety goggles and disposal gloves.
- You may also need a specific respirator for the sealant or paint to protect yourself from any harmful vapours (read the safety directions on the container).

Choosing the right sealant

Sealants should be used on external surfaces such as roofs, as they penetrate the surface and bind into the material.

Choose a sealant specifically designed for use on asbestos materials that has a life of 10 years or more and can be reapplied over the top of the existing coat if required.

Avoid products that require the asbestos material to be vigorously cleaned beforehand as this can release asbestos fibres into air.

STEP 2. Prepare the work area

- Advise your neighbours of what you are planning to do.
- Remove all loose and unnecessary items from the work area.
- Restrict entry to the asbestos work area/s (e.g. by closing a door).
- Cover the floor of the work area with the plastic sheeting and secure with duct tape (this will help contain any runoff from wet sanding methods).
- Make sure all asbestos waste, including dust and contaminated personal protective equipment, is kept separate to all other waste.
- Put on your personal protective equipment.
- Check the fit of your respirator as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Environmental tip:

If you need to clean an asbestos roof with chemicals before sealing, consider how you will manage the run-off. In some cases, the chemicals used for cleaning may be harmful to the environment.

It is important that run-off from the roof is not washed into downpipes as these lead to the roadside gutter which washes into local creeks and waterways. On-the-spot fines apply if this happens. Protect the environment by collecting the run-off and disposing of it in accordance with the directions on the chemical container.

STEP 3. Surface preparation and painting

Do's

- ✓ Wipe dusty surfaces with a damp cloth.
- ✓ Wash with sugar soap or another cleaning chemical.
- ✓ If needed, sand the surface using light **wet sanding** methods (hand sanding with water; **no power tools**).
- ✓ Use a chemical paint stripper and a scraper – but **only on wet surfaces** and taking care not to damage the asbestos material.
- ✓ Use a wallpaper steamer if you need to – keep a spray water bottle handy to ensure the surface remains damp.
- ✓ Paint over existing paint, if it's in good condition.
- ✓ If spray painting, use airless equipment as the low air pressure reduces overspray compared to normal high pressure equipment.
- ✓ If using a paint brush or roller, use it lightly to avoid abrasion or other damage.

Dont's

- ✗ Do not use high-pressure water or compressed air cleaning equipment.
- ✗ Do not dry sand.
- ✗ Do not use a dry broom or paint scraper on uncoated asbestos materials.
- ✗ Do not use household vacuum cleaner to clean up debris.
- ✗ Do not remove personal protective equipment until all work is finished and you have decontaminated yourself (note do not remove to smoke or eat).

WARNING!

Never use electric sanders or other power tools when preparing a surface for painting/sealing. These actions can release fibres into the air and are illegal.

STEP 4. Clean up

- **Never** use dusting, sweeping or brushing methods as they will circulate asbestos fibres into the air.
- Never use a household vacuum cleaner.
- Wear suitable personal protective equipment such as a half face respirator with a Class P1 or P2 filter (dust masks are not adequate).
- Use damp rags to wipe down all surfaces and equipment. If necessary, use damp rags and/or an approved asbestos vacuum cleaner to clean any remaining visibly contaminated sections of work area.
Do not resoak used rags in the bucket, as this will contaminate the water. Instead, fold the rag so a clean surface is exposed or alternatively use a new rag.
- While still wearing your protective equipment, carefully roll or fold plastic drop sheeting from the floor, ground, and other surfaces, so any collected dust or debris does not spill. Lightly spray the dust or debris with water or PVA glue before rolling or folding the plastic for extra safety.
- Place asbestos debris, used rags, plastic sheeting and other waste in disposal bags (only half fill the bag – this is to reduce the chance of the bag splitting).
- After the work area is clean, wet down your personal protective equipment and clothing with a light spray of water and place them and all used damp cloths into a disposal bag.
- Before removing the disposal bags from the work area, wipe external surfaces with damp rags to remove any dust and put the used rags in one of the bags.
- Seal all disposal bags with duct tape, place into a second disposal bag and seal again.
- Label all bags with an appropriate warning such as:
CAUTION – ASBESTOS
DO NOT DAMAGE OR OPEN BAG
DO NOT INHALE DUST
CANCER AND LUNG DISEASE HAZARD
- Dispose of asbestos waste at the appropriate waste facility (contact your local Council for more information). See page 20.

Removing ceramic tiles from asbestos sheeting

Important information:

- Asbestos is a hazardous material.
- It is a risk to your health and the health of those around you if asbestos fibres become airborne.
- Plan ahead to avoid disturbing materials containing asbestos.
- Always prevent creating any dust.
- Follow the correct safety procedures.

STEP 1. Get your equipment together

- 0.2 mm thick plastic bags no more than 1200 mm long and 900 mm wide for collection of asbestos waste.
- 0.2 mm thick plastic sheeting as a drop sheet.
- Duct tape.
- Bucket of water and spray bottle filled with detergent and water.
- Wide scraper, hammer and chisel.
- Disposable cleaning rags (e.g. paper, cloth).
- Personal protective equipment – P1 or P2 respirator, disposable coveralls, safety goggles and disposal gloves hat and shoe protectors.

WARNING!

Check for electrical hazards. As you will be using water in this task, it is safest to turn off all electricity where you are working to prevent electrocution.

STEP 2. Prepare the work area

- Remove all loose and unnecessary items from the work area.
- Close doors and restrict entry.
- Cover the floor with plastic sheeting and secure with duct tape.
- Keep asbestos waste separate to all other waste.
- Put on your personal protective equipment.
- Check the fit of your respirator as per the manufacturer's instructions.

STEP 3. Remove wall tiles

- Use the chisel to gently tap between the top of the tile and the backing sheet to release the tile. **Do not dig the chisel into the backing sheet.**
- As the tile is released, spray detergent water lightly behind the tile to prevent the release of fibres.
- Try to prevent the tile from falling onto the plastic.
- Place tiles in disposal bags (only fill the bag half full).
- Remove tile adhesive and grout residue from backing sheet to achieve a relatively flat and clean surface before laying new tiles. **Do not sand! Treat all waste as asbestos waste.**

If the backing sheet is damaged or broken before or during the removal of the tiles, you'll need to remove the entire sheet. You'll also need to remove the entire sheet if you can't remove the tiles without damaging the backing sheet. Arrange for the sheet to be removed by a professional or remove it yourself using the "Removing bonded materials containing asbestos" procedure (see page 16). Replace the asbestos sheeting with an alternative wall lining (e.g. plywood, plasterboard, fibre cement sheeting).

STEP 4. Clean up

- Use a cloth and detergent water to gently wipe down the wall. Keep the surface damp with the detergent spray. Use a scraper to gently remove all residues and do not dig into the surface of the sheet.



Domestic vacuum cleaners are unsuitable and should never be used, even if they have a HEPA filter.

- With the wall sheeting now clean and level, wipe down again with a damp detergent-water cloth.
- Remove larger scraps from ground plastic sheet and place in a disposal bag.
- Carefully roll or fold plastic sheeting from the floor, so any collected dust or debris does not spill.
- If necessary, use damp rags and/or an approved asbestos vacuum cleaner to clean any remaining visibly contaminated sections of the work area.
- Do not resoak used rags in the bucket, as this will contaminate the water. Either fold the rag and use the clean surface or use a new rag.
- Place asbestos debris, used rags, plastic sheeting and other asbestos waste in disposal bags (only half fill the bag – this is to reduce the chance of the bag splitting).
- After the work area is clean, wet down your personal protective equipment and clothing with a light spray of water and place them and all used damp cloths into a disposal bag.
- Before removing the disposal bags from the work area, wipe external surfaces with damp rags to remove any dust and put the used rags in one of the bags.
- Seal all disposal bags with duct tape, place into a second disposal bag and seal again.
- Label all bags with an appropriate warning such as:
CAUTION – ASBESTOS
DO NOT DAMAGE OR OPEN BAG
DO NOT INHALE DUST
CANCER AND LUNG DISEASE HAZARD
- Dispose of asbestos waste at the appropriate waste facility (contact your local Council for more information). See page 20.

Removing bonded materials containing asbestos

Bonded materials containing asbestos are the most common asbestos materials in Queensland homes. The products include flat wall and ceiling sheeting ("fibro"), corrugated roofing ("Super 6") and ridge capping, eaves/soffits, fencing, water, drainage and flue pipes, roofing shingles and flexible building boards (e.g. *Villaboard*, *Hardiflex*, *Wunderboard* and *Flexiboard*). More information on where you can find bonded materials containing asbestos is on page 3.

Follow the safety procedures below when removing up to 10 square metres of asbestos sheeting.

Remember!

If you are planning to remove 10 square metres or more of asbestos sheeting, you will need to get an asbestos removal certificate. More information is on page 7.

Tradespeople must comply with the content of the *Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos* 2nd edition

WARNING!

It is very dangerous to work on an asbestos roof. Asbestos roofs become very brittle with age (and you could fall through) and are very slippery when wet. Working at a height also presents a risk of falling. Consider using a business that specialises in sealing asbestos roofs.

Important information:

- Asbestos is a hazardous material.
- It is a risk to your health and the health of those around you if asbestos fibres become airborne.
- Plan ahead to avoid disturbing materials containing asbestos.
- Always prevent creating any dust.
- Follow the correct safety procedures.
- Be alert for low density asbestos fibre board – see page 19 for more information.

STEP 1. Get your equipment together

- Suitable asbestos waste containers for the asbestos sheets (e.g. a skip lined with two layers 0.2 mm plastic sheeting).
- 0.2 mm thick plastic sheeting for double wrapping asbestos sheets and as drop sheets.
- 0.2 mm thick plastic bags no more than 1200 mm long and 900 mm wide for double bagging asbestos waste.
- Spray bottle filled with detergent and water.
- Manually controlled, consistent low pressure, coarse spray of water, e.g. garden hose with adjustable pistol-grip fitting on the end.
- Bunding to contain water runoff.
- PVA sealant and low pressure spray equipment (for roof sheeting).
- Low-speed battery-powered drill, hammer and punch or chisel (for removal of screws, bolts or similar fittings).
- Oxy-acetylene torch or other suitable device for removing anchoring screws/bolts.
- Disposable cleaning rags (e.g. paper, cloth)
- Asbestos vacuum cleaner complying with Australian Standard AS3544.
- Personal protective equipment – P1 or P2 respirator, disposable coveralls, safety goggles and disposal gloves, hat and shoe protectors.

WARNING!

Never use angle grinders or other power tools to remove screws or bolts from asbestos roofing. These actions can release asbestos fibres into the air and are illegal.

STEP 2. Prepare the work area

- Advise your neighbours of what you are planning to do.
- Remove all loose and unnecessary items from the work area.
- Cover the floor or ground of the work area with plastic sheeting and secure with duct tape or stakes/tent pegs.
- Restrict entry to the asbestos work area/s (e.g. close doors, put up a barrier).
- Always keep the work area clean, tidy and free from bonded asbestos debris.
- Keep asbestos waste separate from all other waste.
- Put on your personal protective equipment.
- Check the fit of your respirator as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Set up bunding to restrict water run-off

STEP 3. Removing the bonded asbestos

- Avoid working in windy environments.
- Asbestos-cement can become brittle with age, so any removal work on roofs must address the risk of falling through or off the roof.
- **Do not break up the sheeting.**
- **Do not use angle grinders or other power tools** because of the potential for damage to the asbestos-cement sheeting and subsequent fibre release.
- If there is lichen or moss on the roof sheeting, be cautious when using water as wet sheeting is very slippery. Roofing should be sprayed with PVA glue and let dry before sheet removal begins. **Do not use a high pressure water process** to clean the roof sheeting as this will release asbestos fibres from the sheeting.
- **Turn off all electricity in the house to prevent electrocution.**

To remove bonded asbestos walls and fencing:

1. If the asbestos-cement is behind ceramic tiles, remove enough tiles to get access to the fixings of the sheet, taking care not to damage the sheet. Use the chisel to gently tap between the top of the tile and the backing sheet to release the tile. Do not dig the chisel into the backing sheet.
2. As the tile is released, spray detergent water lightly behind the tile to prevent release of fibres.
3. Cut fixings with a cold chisel under the edge of the sheet, or cut around the head using a punch, again minimising damage to the sheet.
4. After spraying with detergent and water, punch any nails through the sheeting to help with removal.
5. Remove all nails and asbestos waste from the timber

Remember: keep the asbestos waste wet to control any asbestos fibres getting into the air.

6. Remove sheets with as little breakage as possible.

Never drop the asbestos-cement sheeting.

Never use ramps, chutes or similar gravity-dependent devices as this may cause the sheets to break and release asbestos fibres into the air.

To remove bonded asbestos roofing:

1. Spray asbestos-cement roofing with PVA. The PVA must be dry before sheet removal begins to avoid slipping.
2. Remove anchoring screws/bolts from the roofing sheets using an oxy-acetylene torch or another suitable method or device that will not damage the sheet.
3. Lower roof sheeting to the ground using slings and/or lifting equipment.

Do not throw sheeting to the ground or use chutes.

Never break the sheets up into smaller pieces.

Do not slide sheeting across other sheets as they may release asbestos fibres.

STEP 4. Clean up

- Wet all asbestos sheets using a fine water spray (including the backs of the sheets once removed).
- Wrap all asbestos sheets in plastic sheeting, seal with duct tape and place in the plastic-lined asbestos waste container or double-wrap in plastic sheeting and seal.
- Label the packaged waste with an appropriate warning such as:

CAUTION – ASBESTOS

DO NOT DAMAGE OR OPEN BAG

DO NOT INHALE DUST

CANCER AND LUNG DISEASE HAZARD

- Remove larger scraps from floor/ground plastic sheet by hand and place in a disposal bag (only half fill the bag – this is to reduce the chance of the bag splitting).
- Carefully roll or fold plastic sheeting from the floor, so any collected dust or debris does not spill. Lightly spray with water or PVA glue for extra safety.

Use damp rags and/or an **approved** asbestos vacuum cleaner to clean your equipment and any remaining visibly contaminated sections of the work area (e.g. the framework, ceiling spaces and exposed wall cavities). Domestic vacuum cleaners are unsuitable and should never be used, even if they have a HEPA filter.

WARNING!

Domestic vacuum cleaners are unsuitable and should never be used, even if they have a HEPA filter.

Note: Rough-sawn timber and insulation materials cannot be wet wiped or vacuumed. They should be sealed with pigmented/coloured PVA glue using a low-pressure spray.

- Do not resoak used rags in the bucket, as this will contaminate the water. Either fold the rag and use the clean surface or use a new rag.
- Place asbestos debris, used rags, plastic sheeting and other asbestos waste in disposal bags.
- After the work area is clean, wet down your personal protective equipment and clothing with a light spray of water and place them and all used damp cloths into a disposal bag.
- Before removing the disposal bags from the work area, wipe external surfaces with new damp rags to remove any dust and put the used rags in one of the bags.
- Seal all disposal bags with duct tape, place into a second disposal bag and seal again.
- Label all bags with an appropriate warning such as:
CAUTION – ASBESTOS
DO NOT DAMAGE OR OPEN BAG
DO NOT INHALE DUST
CANCER AND LUNG DISEASE HAZARD

Dispose of asbestos waste at the appropriate waste facility (contact your local Council for more information). See page 20.

Low density asbestos fibre board

You need to be alert to the possible presence of low density asbestos fibre board, which was often used for wall and ceiling panels. Low density asbestos fibre board is considered a friable asbestos containing material and is a lightly compressed board which looks similar to asbestos cement sheeting or plasterboard. It is also sometimes referred to as asbestos insulating board. Generally, low density asbestos fibre board was manufactured as a flat sheet product although some perforated sheeting typically used for acoustic ceiling applications was also manufactured. The most common example of low density asbestos fibre board is 'Asbestolux', a product formerly manufactured by James Hardie Pty Ltd. Low density asbestos fibre board is often soft and the pressure of a fingernail pushed into the surface can leave an indentation, and can contain up to 70 per cent (by volume) asbestos fibres. Because low density asbestos fibre board is softer than asbestos cement sheeting it will crumble easily if disturbed.



Low density asbestos fibre board *Asbestolux*

It is essential to establish whether maintenance and minor work can be performed without disturbing low density asbestos fibre board. Sawing, drilling or cutting into this material will result in significant fibre release. Therefore, any maintenance work carried out on or around low density asbestos fibre board must be planned and precautions taken to prevent exposure to airborne asbestos fibres. Maintenance and service tasks on or around low density asbestos fibre board can only be carried out after a competent person has assessed the material and the proposed task to determine the level of risk and put into place appropriate control measures.

Loosely bound friable materials such as low density asbestos fibre board are potentially very dangerous. This is because the asbestos fibres can get into the air very easily. **They must only be handled and removed by an asbestos removalist with an 'A' Class certificate** (see page 8 for more information on certificates).

Asbestos backed vinyl sheet flooring

You should be alert to the possible presence of **asbestos backed vinyl sheet flooring** containing asbestos. Asbestos backed vinyl sheet flooring has the 'backing' (the side attached to the floor) and this backing contains friable (easily broken) asbestos material.



Asbestos backed vinyl sheet flooring

The vinyl sheeting itself does not contain asbestos, however, manufacturers sometimes incorporated a felt-like 'backing' for cushioning purposes. It is this backing which contains asbestos (typically 80–100 per cent). Usually applied in sheet form, a lot of asbestos backed vinyl sheet flooring had a 'terrazzo' type (colourful marble or stone chip) pattern look on the surface. It is most commonly found in buildings constructed before the mid-1980s.



Terazzo type asbestos backed vinyl sheet flooring

Loosely bound friable materials, such as asbestos backed vinyl sheet flooring, are potentially very dangerous. This is because the asbestos fibres can get into the air very easily. **They must only be handled and removed by an asbestos removalist with an 'A' Class certificate** (see page 8 for more information on certificates).

Transporting and disposing of asbestos waste

There are laws in place about how asbestos can be transported and disposed of. You are obliged to comply with these laws.

Important information:

- Asbestos is a hazardous material.
- It is a risk to your health and the health of those around you if asbestos fibres become airborne.
- Plan ahead to avoid disturbing materials containing asbestos.
- Always prevent creating any dust.
- Asbestos waste must be double wrapped or bagged in heavy duty plastic bags to prevent its escape into the environment.
- Follow the correct safety procedures.

Transporting and disposing of asbestos waste by a homeowner

If a homeowner intends to transport and dispose of the waste themselves, there are particular laws they must comply with.

Transport

If your job produces 250 kg or more of asbestos waste (about a quarter of a normal household trailer), you must comply with specific waste transport laws. These laws require you to:

- (a) Hold a registration certificate to transport asbestos waste, and
- (b) Have a Regulated Waste Transport Certificate, which accompanies the waste from the point where it's generated to the point where it's disposed of.

A registration to transport asbestos waste can be obtained through your local council. Regulated Waste Transport Certificates can be ordered online from the Department of Environment and Resource Management in books of 50 for a fee. If you only need a single certificate for one load of asbestos waste, you can call the Department on 07 3330 5677.

If you produce less than 250 kg, you don't need to follow these specific requirements, however, in all situations, you must still transport and dispose of the asbestos waste promptly, safely and legally.

Disposal

Asbestos waste must only be disposed of at a site licensed to receive regulated waste. The site will generally be run by a local Council. Each council sets its own rules on if and how it receives asbestos waste. Contact your local Council to find out where you can dispose of asbestos waste, any conditions for disposal (e.g. time of day, maximum amount at one time) and how much it will cost.

If you are taking the asbestos waste to a Council's approved site yourself, place the double wrapped/bagged asbestos waste (labelled as containing asbestos) in a trailer or in the back of a utility or truck. Secure the load to make sure it doesn't bounce or fly out, ensure the plastic wrappings/bags are not at risk of ripping and that the asbestos is not at risk of breaking. Follow the Council's directions when you arrive at the site.

Transporting and disposing of asbestos waste using a commercial contractor

The alternative to the homeowner transporting and disposing of the waste themselves is to engage a commercial contractor.

Commercial contractors can advise you on how the asbestos waste must be packaged for transport and disposal. They can provide different bags, bins and containers, including drums and skips, for asbestos waste.

Before engaging a commercial contractor, it is critically important that you check whether they hold a current registration certificate to transport regulated waste. Commercial contractors include the providers of skip services.

Waste removalists can be found in the Yellow Pages under 'asbestos' or 'rubbish removal'.

It is important to note that where a homeowner contracts out a job in their home, the contractor is conducting commercial work. As this is commercial work, they (the contractor) will need a commercial license to take any quantity of waste away (i.e. the 250 kg limit outlined above does not apply to this situation).

Still got questions about asbestos in the home?

Are you planning or currently performing DIY renovations or repair work? Visit www.health.qld.gov.au or call 1300 QH info (1300 744 636) for further information.

Are you a tradesperson planning or currently performing renovation or repair work at a house? For information about asbestos in the workplace (yes the house becomes your workplace for the duration of your work) contact the Workplace Health and Safety Infoline on 1300 369 915 or visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au.

For information about disposal of asbestos waste, contact your local Council.

Remember, if you are thinking about working with or removing a material that contains asbestos, consider the following questions:

- If it is in good condition (e.g. undamaged), can you leave it alone?
- Have you considered the alternatives to removing the material containing asbestos (e.g. painting or sealing, covering with a suitable non-asbestos product)?
- Can you comply with the laws and safety procedures for working with asbestos (see page 7)?
- Does the job require a licensed asbestos removalist?

Environmental tips:

- Play it safe with asbestos.
- Don't store or reuse any asbestos materials you have removed.
- Don't dispose of asbestos waste in a normal rubbish bin or skip or during Council bulk waste collections.
- Don't dump asbestos waste in the environment. Fines apply.



Play it safe with asbestos

Extra information for tradespeople performing work at a house containing asbestos

Safe work method statements

All tradespeople who perform work that may involve exposure to asbestos must establish safe work methods for the work they are contracted to carry out and must comply with the *Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in Workplaces*.

Minor work at domestic premises that may involve exposure to asbestos containing materials (ACM) includes:

- renovation
- electrical maintenance or installation, including work on electrical meter boards
- the maintenance or installation of walls, roofing, ceilings or flooring
- plumbing maintenance or installation
- drilling.

A Safe Work Method Statement should be written following your risk assessment of all work on confirmed or presumed ACM. The Safe Work Method Statements should at a minimum outline the controls and requirements relating to:

- minimising exposure to asbestos through the use of personal protective equipment
- preventing public access to the work area
- preventing asbestos fibres from becoming airborne
- storage and disposal of asbestos containing material and debris
- clean up and decontamination of the work area
- inspection of the work area to ensure all debris has been removed and cleaned up.

The content of the written safe work method statement can be based upon the asbestos work procedures outlined on pages 11–18 of this guide.

Clearance inspection for the minor work on ACM covered by this guide

When the work is completed, a visual inspection of the asbestos work area should be conducted prior to resumption of normal occupancy so as to make sure it has been properly cleaned and all asbestos waste removed and to confirm there is no visual evidence of dust and debris. This is a mandatory requirement of the workplace health and safety legislation. Particular attention should be paid to the presence of dust on all horizontal surfaces, e.g. window sill's, architraves and skirtings, the tops of air-conditioning ducts, fan blades, and the flooring.

Written confirmation that the work area is clean and free of asbestos waste, dust, and debris should be given to the home owner.

N.B. The clearance inspection advice above is specific to the minor ACM work covered by this guide. Where the asbestos removal work involves the removal of any quantity of friable (easily broken) asbestos, or 10 m² or more of bonded asbestos material, a clearance inspection must be conducted by a competent person who is independent of the person doing the removal work. Further advice regarding this can be found at www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/asbestos

Nothing precludes a homeowner or tradesperson adopting asbestos safe work methods of an equal or higher standard to those outlined above, or a business or homeowner requiring a tradesperson to comply with a higher standard. Homeowners can reasonably expect tradespeople performing minor works on ACM to follow the safe work methods outlined in this guide.

Additional information on asbestos

The documents below provide more detailed information on asbestos and can be viewed online at:
www.worksafe.qld.gov.au.

Handling asbestos safely after a storm (PDF, this document outlines handling asbestos after a storm).

Identifying and recording asbestos in the workplace (PDF, this document outlines the requirements for identifying asbestos containing materials and maintaining a register).

Clearance inspections for asbestos work areas (PDF, this document details the requirements for clearance inspections for asbestos work areas).

Asbestos flooring (PDF, this document outlines information regarding asbestos backed vinyl sheet flooring and vinyl tiles containing asbestos).

Low density asbestos fibre board (PDF, this document outlines information regarding low density asbestos fibre board).

For information on the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* or the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008* please visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au

Information on the *Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in Workplaces*, along with the *Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos* can be found online at www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au

Notes

