



## How to remove asbestos

### In the workplace

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)* requires all persons conducting a business or undertaking to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that workers and other persons are not put at risk from work carried out as part of the business or undertaking. This includes asbestos removal work, asbestos-related work and the risk of exposure to airborne asbestos.

The *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)* (WHS Regulations) include specific obligations in relation to safely removing asbestos, including, but not limited to:

- demolition and refurbishment requirements
- licence and notification requirements for removing asbestos
- air monitoring and clearance inspection requirements
- health monitoring duties, and
- training requirements.

The WHS Regulations also include specific requirements for people with management and control, including requirements for the development of an asbestos register; labelling identified asbestos products; the development of a written asbestos management plan; and ensuring that these documents are readily accessible to workers and contractors.

Remember - a home is a workplace for contractors while they are working on the premises and they will have obligations under the work health and safety legislation.

### In the home

Some jobs are best left to the experts – asbestos removal work is best performed by a licensed asbestos removalist. If you are considering a renovation that involves disturbing large amounts of ACM, removing any friable asbestos products, or demolition of all or part of your property, think safety first.

It is strongly recommended that you engage a person who knows how to manage this work safely without risk to you, your family or your neighbours and where necessary can engage a licensed removalist to undertake the removal work.



**Homeowners who decide to undertake asbestos removal work themselves should follow safe work procedures and safety precautions to minimise asbestos fibres getting into the air. The equipment you need should be available at your local hardware store.**

### Key points to remember

- always wear appropriate respiratory protection, disposable coveralls and lace-less boots that can be wiped down or shoe covers
- to reduce dust, thoroughly wet down the material before you start and regularly during the work
- use hand tools on asbestos containing materials as power tools, abrasive cutting or sanding may release asbestos fibres
- to avoid generating loose fibres remove ACM with minimal breakage
- any non-disposable item should be wiped down with a wet cloth and the cloth disposed of with the asbestos waste
- safely package all asbestos waste, including any personal protective equipment and cleaning cloths, by sealing in heavy duty plastic sheets or bags (200 micron thick) and label 'DANGER- ASBESTOS WASTE – DO NOT INHALE DUST'
- dispose of all asbestos waste at a licensed waste facility.

For more detailed information on safety precautions and personal protective equipment go to [asbestos.sa.gov.au](http://asbestos.sa.gov.au)



### Where to put asbestos

Asbestos waste means all removed ACM, as well as disposable items used during asbestos removal work, such as plastic sheeting and disposable coveralls, respirators and cleaning cloths.

Asbestos waste can only be dumped at Environment Protection Authority licensed waste transfer stations or depots. For more information and to access a list of licensed waste transfer stations and depots and their packaging requirements visit [asbestos.sa.gov.au](http://asbestos.sa.gov.au)

There are significant penalties for those caught illegally dumping waste.



**For further information go to [asbestos.sa.gov.au](http://asbestos.sa.gov.au)**



REMOVE SAFELY



## Asbestos

Asbestos fibres are known to be hazardous when inhaled. Fibres can be released into the air when products containing asbestos are incorrectly handled, removed or transported for disposal. Asbestos related diseases include pleural plaques, asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma.

The production, importation and use of all forms of asbestos or asbestos containing materials (ACM) is banned in Australia. However, some houses built or renovated before 1990 may still contain ACM. The total ban on the use of all asbestos products did not come into effect until December 2003.

For more detailed information on asbestos go to [asbestos.sa.gov.au](http://asbestos.sa.gov.au)

## Asbestos containing materials

**Asbestos containing materials are classified as either friable or non-friable.**

**Friable** (non-bonded) asbestos products contain loosely packed asbestos fibres that can be crushed easily in the hand. Friable asbestos containing materials are potentially dangerous because non-bonded asbestos fibres can be easily released into the air.

**Non-friable** (bonded) asbestos products are usually bonded or mixed with cement or a similar material. The asbestos fibres are tightly bound in the product and are not normally released into the air unless they are disturbed, damaged or badly weathered. If non-friable asbestos products are in good condition and are left undisturbed they present no known health risks.

Non-friable asbestos products that have been damaged or badly weathered may become friable.

**It is not possible to find out whether a material contains asbestos simply by looking at it. If you are not sure whether a material contains asbestos, play it safe and assume it does or get it tested by an accredited laboratory (the National Association of Testing Authorities can provide details of an accredited laboratory in your area, go to [nata.asn.au](http://nata.asn.au)).**



## How to find and identify asbestos

Asbestos was used in more than 3000 products because of its durability, fire resistance and insulating properties. The first step in minimising the risk of exposure to asbestos fibres is being aware of where you can find asbestos and knowing how to safely deal with it.

As a general rule if a building was constructed or renovated:

- before the mid-1980s it is **highly likely** that it has asbestos containing products
- between the mid-1980s and 1990 it is **likely** that it has asbestos containing products
- after 1990 it is **unlikely** that it has asbestos containing products.

Use the *find and identify* tool on [asbestos.sa.gov.au](http://asbestos.sa.gov.au) to assist you to work out where asbestos containing materials might be found in your house.

### Asbestos in the workplace

The *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)* (WHS Regulations) and the *Codes of Practice – How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace* and *How to Safely Remove Asbestos* provide guidance on managing asbestos in the workplace.

More information on asbestos in the workplace and the legislative requirements can be found at [asbestos.sa.gov.au](http://asbestos.sa.gov.au).

## What to do with asbestos

**If ACM is in good condition, and the asbestos fibres remain firmly bound in the product, you generally do not need to remove it. However, if you have found any friable asbestos, or badly damaged or weathered ACMs, then it is recommended that these be removed.**

**Go to [asbestos.sa.gov.au](http://asbestos.sa.gov.au) for advice on what to do in particular situations.**

## Examples of where you can find asbestos containing materials

### Outside

- asbestos cement roofing (sheets and shingles)
- asbestos cement wall cladding, including 'brick look' wall cladding
- asbestos cement fencing
- moulded products such as flues, downpipes, guttering, ridge capping and water pipes
- gable ends and lining under eaves

### Inside

- asbestos cement wall linings and ceiling linings
- splashbacks and backing to wall tiles
- flooring – vinyl floor tiles and asbestos backed sheets
- underlay sheeting for ceramic tiles and carpet underlay
- insulation in wood heaters and sheeting beneath wood heater hearths
- flues to fireplaces and fireplace surrounds
- loose fill insulation in roof cavity

### Other

- sealants, gaskets, adhesives and filters
- brake pads, clutch components and other friction products
- textiles – asbestos containing felts, ropes, fire blankets and woven asbestos cable sheathing
- rubber, plastic and paint products (particularly industrial), epoxy paints
- sprayed insulation materials used for fire-proofing, thermal protection, insulation and sound-proofing
- lagging and insulation materials used in a wide range of electrical, thermal and acoustic settings, including backing for electrical meter boards.