

Building Information Sheet: Hazards - Asbestos

Removal of Asbestos Cement Building Products

A WorkSafe asbestos removal license is required when 10m² or more of asbestos containing material (asbestos cement sheeting) is to be removed.

The following safe work procedures must be followed when removing AC building products.

1. When AC building products are being removed, signs and barriers must be erected to warn of the danger and to prevent unauthorised people entering.
2. All people in the AC removal area must wear disposable coveralls and either a class P1 or P2 disposable mask.
3. AC sheets must be sprayed with a PVA (poly vinyl acetate) solution or kept wet with water during removal. Care must be taken on roofs because AC sheets are brittle and slippery when wet.
4. Power tools must NOT be used, except to remove screws.
5. AC products must be removed with minimal breakage, and lowered to the ground, not dropped.
6. Removed sheets are to be stacked on polythene sheeting, then wrapped and sealed into bundles for disposal.
7. Sheets must not be left lying about the site where they may be further broken or crushed by machinery or site traffic.
8. When removed sheets are being stacked, care must be taken not to skid one sheet over another, as this will result in the release of fibres.
9. Roof gutters must be cleaner or sealed prior to their removal.
10. Any AC residue remaining in the roof space or within the removed area is to be cleaned up, using an approved vacuum cleaner if necessary.
11. All waste containing asbestos is to be kept wet wrapped in polythene or otherwise sealed, and removed from the site as soon as possible.
12. Used disposable coveralls and masks are to be placed in bags for removal with other asbestos waste.

Hazards

If inhaled by humans, asbestos fibres can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma, however; all AC building products can be removed safely without risk to workers or the public when safe work procedures are complied with.

Although the risk to humans from installed and undisturbed AC products is negligible, a significant hazard will be created if power tools are used for cutting, drilling, sanding, grinding or sawing AC products and surface weathering of AC products can lead to the release of asbestos fibres during removal. This is why safe work procedures must be implemented and followed at all stages of the removal and disposal process.

The following website provides a guide to identifying asbestos in fencing products and further information is available from either WorkSafe WA or the Health Department of WA.

<https://aussiefencing.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/How-to-tell-the-difference-between-Hardi-Fence-and-Asbestos.pdf>

Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulation 2004

Disposal of Material Containing Asbestos

Asbestos for Disposal to be Separated, Wrapped and Labelled

Asbestos material must be:

1. Separated from other material for disposal where that is reasonable practicable;
2. Wrapped or contained in a manner that prevents asbestos fibres entering the atmosphere during transportation by road;
3. Labelled or marked with the words "CAUTION ASBESTOS" in letters no less than 50 millimetres high.

Disposal of Material Containing Asbestos

All asbestos material must be disposed at a Disposal Site licenced to accept asbestos waste under Part V of the Environmental Protection Act 1986. The Chief Executive Officer of the DoE may also approve other facilities to accept asbestos material.

Duty to Notify Other of Presence of Asbestos

A person who takes material containing asbestos to a Disposal Site (or facility approved by the Department of Environment) MUST inform the person who operates or controls that facility that the material is, or contains asbestos.

Penalties for Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with the Regulations can result in a fine of up to \$5000. Penalties can be considerably greater if an offence is committed under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 (such as pollution caused from the illegal disposal of controlled waste).

Contacts

For information on safe handling of asbestos products, and asbestos in the home, contact:

An Environmental Health Officer OR Department of Health (WA) (08) 9388 4999

For information about asbestos in the workplace and asbestos caused diseases, contact:

Asbestos Disease Society of Australia (08) 9344 4077

For Asbestos Disposal Sites, contact:

Department of Environment and Conservation

OR contact one the of asbestos disposal facilities below for specific conditions of disposal

Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council: 1094 Toodyay Road, Red Hill 9574 6235

City of Armadale: Hopkinson Road, Armadale 9399 3935

City of Canning: Ranford Road, Canning Vale 9231 0670

City of Cockburn: Rockingham Road, Henderson 9411 3543

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