

ASBESTOS SAFETY CHECK



- Asbestos is a naturally-occurring mineral that was used in many building products up until the 1980's. In Australia, a complete ban of asbestos and its products became effective in 2003.
- Asbestos containing products can be friable (loose, powdery and crumbly) or non-friable asbestos (bonded such as fibro cement sheets).
- If asbestos is disturbed it can release dangerous fine particles of dust containing asbestos fibres which can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma.
- There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos fibres.
- Most people can't tell whether building materials contain asbestos just by looking at them. Only scientific testing of a sample of material by an accredited National Association of Testing Authorities laboratory (NATA) can confirm asbestos.
- If the asbestos fibres remain firmly bound in a solid cement sheet or structure, and is in good condition you generally do not need to remove the asbestos.
- If asbestos must be removed, the safest way is to engage a licensed asbestos removalist who can be found at safework.nsw.gov.au.
- Friable asbestos can only be removed by a licensed asbestos removalist with a friable asbestos license.
- If you use the appropriate safety precautions, you are permitted to remove a maximum of 10 square metres of non-friable asbestos in NSW.
- When tradespersons are undertaking home maintenance or renovations, if in doubt, assume you are dealing with asbestos and take every precaution.
- If you do need to work with any asbestos material there are a number of safety precautions you will need to take including wearing approved protective clothing, the correct mask (not every mask is safe) or breathing apparatus.
- Never use power tools such as drills, angle grinders, circular saws and sanders or use high pressure water blasters or compressed air on asbestos materials.
- Asbestos waste can only be disposed of at specific landfills located in various regions in NSW.
- Abandoned buildings often invite curiosity and young children wanting to play inside of them. Many old and abandoned properties may contain asbestos that is in poor condition and may harm the health of anyone who visits the property.
- Illegally dumped waste may contain asbestos that may be harmful to the health of anyone who disturbs the asbestos without wearing the right protective equipment.
- Aboriginal communities can help by reporting illegally dumped asbestos waste.
- Importantly, if you think it is asbestos, Don't cut it! Don't drill it! Don't drop it! Don't sand it! Don't saw it! Don't scrape it! Don't scrub it! Don't dismantle it! Don't tip it! Don't waterblast it! Don't demolish it! And whatever you do. Don't dump it!

WHO TO CONTACT

General enquiries

1800 asbestos (1800 272 378)

Further information

asbestosawareness.com.au

