

FACT SHEET

– Safe Asbestos Removal



 (02) 4677 1100
 wollondilly.nsw.gov.au



The Department of Local Government has released information to Councils and their communities on the safe removal of Asbestos.

Councils regularly consider building proposals that may involve the need for Asbestos removal - as a very common example, old fibro contain the fibres.

Asbestos is the generic term for a number of fibrous silicate minerals. Products made from asbestos cement - bonded asbestos material - include fibro sheeting (flat and corrugated) as well as water, drainage and flue pipes, roofing shingles and guttering. Only fibro products made before 1987 contain asbestos. The manufacture and use of asbestos products was banned nationally from 31 December 2003.

Breathing in asbestos fibres can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. The risk of contracting these diseases increases with the number of fibres inhaled and the risk of lung cancer from inhaling asbestos fibres is also greater if you smoke. People who get health problems from inhaling asbestos have usually been exposed to high levels of asbestos for a long time. The symptoms of these diseases do not usually appear until about 20 to 30 years after the first exposure to asbestos.

Most people are exposed to very small amounts of asbestos as they go about their daily lives and do not develop asbestos-related health problems. Finding that your home or workplace is made from fibro products does not mean your health is at risk. Studies have shown that these products, if in sound condition and left undisturbed, are not a significant health risk. If the asbestos fibres remain firmly bound in cement, generally you do not need to remove the fibro or even coat it.

Health problems can occur when people are unaware of the hazards of working with fibro and do not take appropriate precautions. The important point is to always work to avoid or minimise the release of dust or small particles from asbestos material. If you use common sense and follow basic safety guidelines, working with fibro products should not be a problem.

The most accurate way to find out if your fibro contains asbestos is for experienced people to inspect and test it. You cannot tell by looking at it. Details of asbestos testing authorities and licensed asbestos removal contractors are available from WorkCover's Asbestos and Demolition Unit on telephone number 131 050 or (02) 9370 5301.

Links

For more information about safely removing asbestos, take a look at these web sites or call the phone numbers listed:

Asbestos Awareness: www.asbestosawareness.com.au

New South Wales Government: www.nsw.gov.au/fibro and diysafe.nsw.gov.au

Work Cover NSW: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

NSW Department of Environment and Conversation (encompassing the Environment Protection Authority): www.dec.nsw.gov.au

WSN Environmental Solutions: <http://www.wsn.com.au/>

The Home Building Service: www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

[Asbestos Plan For NSW - Workcover Authority of NSW](#)

The NSW Environment Protection Authority's Licensing Section telephone 131 555 or (02) 9325 5686 can provide details of approved waste disposal locations.

Contact

Environmental Services: 4677 1100

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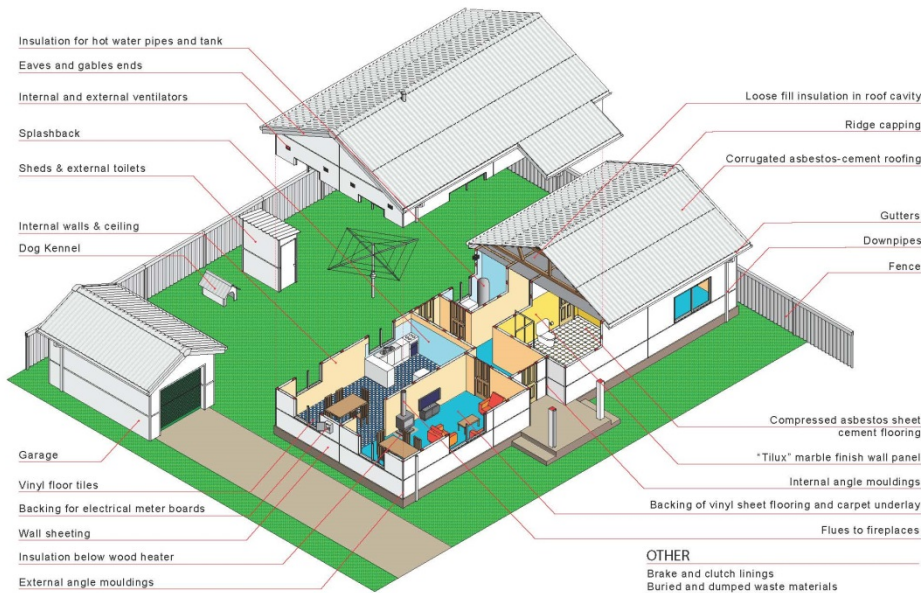


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Asbestos

Asbestos has been used in thousands of homes throughout Australia. It is most commonly found in fibro. In 2003, the manufacture and supply of asbestos was banned.

WHERE ASBESTOS MAY BE FOUND IN A TYPICAL HOME



Health effects

Asbestos is a known carcinogen. The inhalation of asbestos fibres can cause mesothelioma, lung cancer, asbestosis and asbestos related pleural disease.

Always seek advice about suitable health and safety precautions before disturbing asbestos materials. Visit www.health.nsw.gov.au for more information on the health effects of asbestos.

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Safe management

Asbestos can release fibres into the air when disturbed. It is prevalent during the renovation and demolition of buildings containing asbestos, and when there is any direct action on the asbestos, such as drilling, boring, cutting, filing, brushing, grinding, sanding, breaking, smashing, blowing with compressed air and water blasting.

It is not always possible to detect asbestos just by looking at it. The best way to identify asbestos is by having a licensed asbestos removalist inspect it. If unsure whether a material contains asbestos, treat it as though it does.

Safe removal

Before renovating or doing maintenance work on your home, find out if it contains asbestos and know what to do to remove and dispose of it safely. If more than 10 square metres of bonded asbestos needs to be removed, you must engage a bonded asbestos removalist who is licensed by WorkCover.

Most building or demolition work requires some form of approval. Before erecting or demolishing a building, or making any alterations, find out from the local council if a development consent or complying development certificate is required.

Before any asbestos is removed, advise your neighbours of the time and date of removal, and the name of the licensed removalist.

For more information, see WorkCover's guide, *Working with asbestos* (catalogue no. WC05484).

Safe disposal

Asbestos is classified as a hazardous material. There are strict guidelines about how it should be packaged and transported, and where it can be disposed.

All asbestos must be specially wrapped, labelled and disposed of, as soon as possible, at a facility that can lawfully receive asbestos waste.

For more information, see *Safely disposing of asbestos waste in your home* at www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Who to contact?

Safe management of asbestos in your home

General asbestos safety issues Local Council

Derelict properties Local Council

Complaints about unsafe work at a residential property

Work conducted by a neighbour (including a home owner or tenant as part of home maintenance, renovation or small scale demolition) Local Council

Work conducted by a contractor or worker WorkCover NSW

Licensed removal work at a residence WorkCover NSW

Transport and disposal

Safe disposal of waste Environment Protection Authority

Landfill facilities in Sydney Metro Environment Protection Authority

Landfill facilities in regional areas Local Council

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Further information

WorkCover NSW	13 10 50	www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
Environment Protection Authority	13 15 55	www.environment.nsw.gov.au
Ministry of Health		www.health.nsw.gov.au
NSW Government		www.nsw.gov.au/fibro
Safe Work Australia		www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au
Asbestos Education Committee		www.asbestosawareness.com.au