



# Management of asbestos containing materials in the workplace checklist

## Introduction

This publication has been developed to highlight safety risks with asbestos containing materials (ACM) at the workplace. It will provide information and assist you with understanding legal requirements relating to the identification and assessment of ACM at the workplace.

## What are Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM)

Asbestos is a hazardous material that poses a risk to health by inhalation if the asbestos fibres become airborne and people are exposed to these fibres. Inhalation of asbestos fibres is known to cause mesothelioma, asbestosis and lung cancer.

ACM is any material, object, product or debris that contains asbestos. ACM was used extensively in Australian buildings and structures, plant and equipment and in ships, trains and motor vehicles during the 1950 – 1980s. It was also used in friction materials (such as brake pads) and gaskets, which were only discontinued on 31 December 2003. It is likely that buildings built or renovated before 1990 contain ACM. Import of ACM is prohibited, however it has been identified that occasionally ACM is still imported, for instance in building materials.

Asbestos materials can be classified into two main forms: 'friable' or 'non-friable'.

Friable asbestos means any material that contains asbestos and is in the form of a powder or can be easily crumbled, pulverised or reduced to a powder by hand pressure when dry.

Non-friable asbestos means any asbestos-containing material other than friable asbestos.

Examples of ACM include but are not limited to:

- asbestos lagging, millboard, felt and woven asbestos matting;
- asbestos cement building products such as fences, switchboards and roofing;
- vinyl floor tiles;
- putty/mastic used to seal steel/aluminium frames windows;
- sprayed on insulation and acoustic applications;
- heater banks (air-conditioning ducts);
- suspended ceiling tiles;
- friction materials (brake pads, shoes, etc.);
- industrial gaskets; and
- naturally occurring ores/soils.

For a comprehensive list of examples of asbestos containing materials see Appendix A of the Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in Workplaces [NOHSC:2018(2005)].

**Regional Offices**

## Duties relating to the management of ACM

Employers, persons having control of the workplace, main contractors and self-employed persons all have responsibilities for identifying the presence and location of asbestos at the workplace and assessing the risks in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in Workplaces [NOHSC:2018(2005)]. This includes:

1. providing a current asbestos register at the workplace and informing persons who may come into contact with ACM in the workplace about the register - the register must be made available at the workplace;
2. labelling asbestos-containing materials at the workplace as far as practicable;
3. ensuring that prior to the commencement of any maintenance, repair or cleaning work on identified or suspected asbestos that the asbestos register and any assessments have been reviewed, so that safe work methods can be put in place; and
4. conducting all work involving removal of asbestos containing materials in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos 2nd Edition [NOHSC:2002 (2005)].

## Identifying and assessing ACM within the workplace

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 5.43 requires employers, self-employed persons or persons having control of the workplace to identify and assess asbestos hazards at the workplace.

The presence and location of asbestos must be identified at the workplace and the assessment of any ACM must be conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in Workplaces [NOHSC: 2018 (2005)]. Where ACM is identified, a register needs to be developed and the register is to be made available to every person, which may include employees and contractors, who may come into contact with ACM in the workplace.

Where ACM is identified in a workplace, the associated risks are to be assessed in consultation with workers and/or their representatives. The purpose of this risk assessment is to allow informed decisions to be made about control measures, induction and training, air monitoring and health surveillance requirements.

Only competent persons should perform risk assessments or any subsequent reviews or revisions of risk assessments. The risk assessment should take account:

- the condition of the ACM (e.g. whether it is friable or bonded and stable, and whether it is likely to be damaged or deteriorate);
- the likelihood of people being exposed to ACM; and
- whether the nature or location of any work to be carried out is likely to disturb the ACM.

The asbestos register and risk assessments should be reviewed regularly by a competent person, particularly when there has been a change in the condition of the ACM.

A competent person who is identifying and assessing ACM within the workplace means the person has either been trained, has qualifications or experience, or a combination of those things, and the knowledge and skills to manage asbestos. A competent person should also have in depth knowledge of the Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in Workplaces [NOHSC:2018 (2005)].

## Further reading

- Occupational Safety Health Regulations 1996 – regulations 5.42 – 5.52 relating to asbestos
- [Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in Workplaces \[NOHSC:2018\(2005\)\]](#)
- Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos 2nd Edition [NOHSC:2002(2005)]
- National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Awareness and Management: [www.asbestossafety.gov.au/research-publications/national-strategic-plan-asbestos-management-and-awareness](http://www.asbestossafety.gov.au/research-publications/national-strategic-plan-asbestos-management-and-awareness)

# Checklist

## Identification of asbestos hazards



Has ACM been located and identified



Has the type and condition of ACM been identified



Identification was carried out by a competent person



ACM labelled

- 
- Has the location of ACM been identified in all buildings that the organisation operates from (i.e. buildings owned or leased) – including ACM in any inaccessible areas?
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- Has the type (e.g.: AC sheet, lagging on pipes & flues, ACM gaskets in plant or machinery, window putty) and condition (i.e. damaged or intact) of ACM been identified?
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- Has the identification been carried out by a competent person?
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- Is ACM clearly labelled in all areas and are warning signs present near the entrance to work areas where asbestos is present, where practicable.
- A competent person can advise on the placement of labels and warning signs.
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## Asbestos risk assessment



Risks have been assessed by a competent person



Risk assessment included consultation with staff



Risk assessment included condition of ACM



Risk assessment included likelihood of people being exposed

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- Have the risks for all ACM in the workplace been assessed?
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- Did the risk assessment include:
- consultation with workers or their representatives
  - condition of the ACM (e.g. friable or bonded and stable)
  - whether ACM is liable to damage or deterioration
  - likelihood of exposure to asbestos fibres
  - whether the nature or the location of any work to be carried out is likely to disturb the asbestos
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- Has the risk assessment been carried out by a competent person
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# Asbestos register



Is there an asbestos register



Has the register been reviewed in the last 12 months

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- Is an asbestos register readily accessible at the workplace?

What arrangements are in place to ensure the register is readily accessible to staff, contractors and any other person who may be exposed at the workplace? (Has training been provided etc)

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Does the register contain the following:

- dates of inspection/identification
  - name of competent person who carried out inspection/identification
  - locations of ACM in buildings (includes which plant and equipment contains ACM)
  - types (white, brown, blue) and form (friable or non-friable) of asbestos at each location
  - condition of asbestos at each location (e.g. friable or bonded, damaged or intact)
  - results of the analysis of samples for each location (if carried out)
  - location of any presumed asbestos, including inaccessible areas (if any) likely to contain asbestos (e.g. wall cavities, lagging of pipes)
  - date of each risk assessment
  - name of competent person/s who carried out risk assessment
  - risk assessment findings and conclusions including any reviews and revisions
  - air monitoring results (if any) and any assessment of these results
  - recommended control measures
  - details of work or maintenance on ACM (if any) including the company or persons involved, the date and the scope of work undertaken and details of clearance certificates.
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- Has the register been reviewed within the last 12 months?

Note: A competent person may reasonably consider that ACM in very good condition and with low risk of disturbance can be assessed less frequently. A reduction in review and assessment frequency must be supported by:

- the written recommendation of a competent person based on risk
- adequacy of systems in place to report:
  - damage
  - disturbance or
  - work involving the ACMthat occurs between assessments

A competent person may reasonably consider that ACM in a very good condition and with low risk of disturbance does not require a review and assessment every 12 months. The maximum period between a review of the asbestos register is 3 years and must be supported by a written recommendation from the competent person. In addition, adequate systems must be in place to report any damage, disturbance or work involving ACM.

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## Working with asbestos



Are systems in place to ensure work is done in a safe manner



Asbestos register is available to all employees and contractors



Do not use power tools



Water used to minimise dust

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- Do any of the employees or contractors carry out any work (e.g. maintenance) on the ACM, such as cutting, grinding, sawing, drilling and sanding
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Are systems in place to ensure any work on ACM is carried out in a safe manner, including:

- asbestos register is made available to all employees and contractors
- all persons working on ACM record any work which is done on the ACM in the asbestos register
- the area is segregated from other work
- power tools are not used – only non-powered hand tools are used
- dust control measures are used where possible (e.g. water is used to minimise dust – no use of dry abrasive/cutting techniques)
- there is no use of compressed air, no dry-brushing of residue or dry sweeping, no dry shaking
- workers are provided with adequate PPE – e.g. disposable overalls, P2 masks or respirators (refer to Code of Practice)
- provision is made for the clean up of the work area, tools and workers
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- Removal of any amount of friable ACM or >10m<sup>2</sup> of non-friable ACM requires a licensed asbestos removalist
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## Information, training and consultation



Relevant persons have been trained



Asbestos register is available to all employees and contractors

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- Have all relevant persons, for example building receptionists, managers, building managers and cleaners received training on the presence of ACM and the asbestos register?
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- Is the asbestos register available to employees and their representatives, contractors, persons who are likely to conduct work on or remove ACM, and any person who may be exposed?
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- Are systems in place to ensure the asbestos register is used (e.g. log book is used)
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## Waste clean up and disposal



Dispose of waste properly



Seal in plastic or place it in a plastic-lined skip bin



Waste is labelled



ACM is transported to appropriate landfill

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Are systems in place to ensure any asbestos waste is disposed of properly, including:

- sealed in plastic or other container, or
  - placed in plastic-lined skip bin
  - waste is labelled
  - ACM is transported to approved landfill
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## Health surveillance



Health surveillance is supervised by an Appointed Medical Practitioner



Health surveillance is conducted before commencing employment as well as at regular intervals

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- Are systems in place to provide employees health surveillance if their health is at risk as a result of their exposure to asbestos, for example:
    - if employees have worked with asbestos in any manner that is likely to have created significant levels airborne fibres (e.g. dry cutting, drilling, grinding or other abrasive techniques), and NOT used adequate PPE
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