



Imported Materials with Asbestos Working Group

Vespa scooter and side car with asbestos-containing brake pads

Purpose

This safety alert provides information regarding recent imports of Vespa scooters for which analysis of the sidecar brake components found chrysotile asbestos.

Background

In February 2017, the Australian Border Force (ABF) confirmed the presence of asbestos in the sidecar brake components of Vespa scooters imported from China. No asbestos was identified within other components of the scooters.

The scooters were imported from China and were thought to be asbestos-free, but subsequent testing by a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratory has shown some of the brake components contained chrysotile asbestos.



Photo 1: Sidecar brake pads (containing asbestos) removed from imported Vespa scooter.

While asbestos has been a prohibited product in Australia since December 2003, in many countries it is still used in manufactured products. Certification provided to importers from overseas manufacturers that goods are asbestos-free have sometimes found to be wrong for the purposes of our regulations.

The use of all forms of asbestos has been banned in Australia since the end of 2003. This means that the import, manufacture, supply, sale and use or reuse of asbestos and asbestos-containing products is no longer permitted, except under very limited circumstances.

Local standards in some supplier countries may classify goods 'asbestos free' where they meet a certain low level of asbestos content. In Australia, a product found with any level of asbestos is prohibited for import or use.

Action Required

Importers should be aware of the varying definitions and standards applied in the country of origin and/or supply. Australian regulations apply at the border. Importers should also be aware that in some countries Australia trades with, asbestos is added to brake components for domestic use.

The importer must ensure they do not import asbestos into Australia.

Where your vehicle is deemed a risk of containing asbestos, the ABF will require assurances that parts or components do not contain asbestos. If adequate assurance is not provided, you will face delays and be responsible for costs incurred when the vehicle is held at the border for the purposes of sampling and testing. Importers should be familiar with the information on the Department's [asbestos webpage](#).