



## 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 present of asbestos in the sidecar brake components of Vespa scooters imported from Vietnam. The shipment was quarantined by the ABF, pending removal of the asbestos materials. 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 the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) 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.

This Alert has been developed by the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) Imported Materials with Asbestos Working Group, whose membership comprises representatives from: Australian Border Force, Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency, Comcare, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, Australian Competition & Consumer Commission, WorkSafe Australian Capital Territory, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Northern Territory WorkSafe, SafeWork SA, WorkSafe Tasmania, Safe Work Australia, WorkSafe Victoria, Safe Work NSW, WorkSafe Western Australia, Department of Employment.

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. They must:

- request certification from the manufacturer or importer that the goods are asbestos-free
- obtain evidence from the overseas supplier (e.g. product testing results that the product/material does not contain asbestos)
- arrange a competent person to sample the goods/materials for testing by a laboratory prior to shipping (It is recommended that a NATA accredited laboratory, accredited for the relevant test method (AS 4964 Method for the qualitative identification of asbestos in bulk samples), or internationally equivalent laboratories be used).

**Note - the cost of any tests or verification measures undertaken will be borne by the importer.**

To reduce the risk of importing or supplying products containing asbestos, read the [fact sheet](#) developed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection which provides information as to:

- how the importation of asbestos is regulated at the Australian border and the products at particular risk of containing asbestos
- what businesses importing material must do to ensure the imported products do not contain asbestos, and
- What assurances Australian importers can provide to demonstrate that imported materials do not contain asbestos.