



ASEA FACTS



Barriers, motivations and options
for increasing asbestos removal in
the residential and commercial sectors



As prepared by Ipsos Social Research Institute

> RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

Key findings

The following conclusions have been drawn from the research in relation to homeowners and asbestos removal in the residential sector:

- **Cost** is the main factor when making decisions relating to asbestos removal
- **Low awareness of the risk** of products containing asbestos is a barrier to informed decision making
- **Perceived likelihood of health impacts** is associated with a likelihood to remove asbestos
- **Government initiatives** which reduce the combined cost of removal and disposal are effective
- **Interest-free loans** are an effective means of increasing removal, although less so than reducing costs.
- **Renovators are more likely than others to remove asbestos** but are limited in their information-seeking behaviours.

Importance of factors

Conjoint analysis was undertaken to understand the impact that the following three factors had on homeowners who are making decisions on asbestos removal:

- location of the asbestos
- application of a hypothetical government initiative
- the amount/cost of asbestos to be removed

Location

The results suggest that the influence of the location of asbestos is smaller than the influence of a government initiative and size/cost of the asbestos.

Government initiatives

- The results show that initiatives which offer the greatest reduction in total cost of removal and disposal are the most effective in encouraging homeowners to remove asbestos.

- The initiative under which immediate removal of asbestos is most likely, is free disposal (this initiative also offers the highest reduction in cost).

Amount of asbestos to be removed/cost

- The results suggest that homeowners and renovators are more likely to remove small amounts of asbestos where the cost of the job is around \$500.

Motivations and barriers

Motivations

The research shows that the key motivations for homeowners to remove asbestos are:

- Avoidance of potential associated health risks
- Intention to renovate (and potentially disturb asbestos materials) was a trigger for the consideration of removal (note: conversely, the presence of asbestos also acted as a barrier to renovation work in some instances).
- Presence of others in the home (particularly children)
- Moral obligations
- Potential depreciation in property value

Barriers

The research shows that the key barriers for homeowners to remove asbestos are:

- Cost of removal
- Income - those with lower incomes are less likely to remove asbestos immediately
- Location - there was a perception that asbestos inside the home posed a higher risk than external materials
- Lack of urgency or plans to disturb

COMMERCIAL SECTOR

Key findings

The following conclusions have been drawn from the research in relation to commercial building managers and asbestos removal in the commercial sector:

- The role of strata and property managers is relatively limited in terms of decision-making power regarding asbestos
- Property managers were strongly motivated by an adherence to legislative requirements
- Cost is regarded as the primary barrier to asbestos removal, and are perceived as being high.
- Asbestos removal was thought to be a commercial decision for owners, rather than a risk-based one.
- Perceived factors of the total cost of asbestos removal include:
 - the cost of specialist contractors
 - the cost of disposing asbestos appropriately
 - the disruption to business for the tenant (the cost of which may be passed on to the owner)
 - the loss of rental income for a period
 - further inspections and reporting of the status of the building after removal

Future directions

- Government initiatives or incentives to keep costs down are likely to have a positive impact on increasing the rate at which asbestos is removed from the built environment.
- Levels of asbestos awareness are generally high, but knowledge and understanding of when asbestos may begin to deteriorate and pose a greater risk to health is lower. Future efforts should target improving risk literacy relating to asbestos in the commercial and residential sectors.
- Those planning to undertake renovations are the group most likely to consider asbestos removal. Further asbestos awareness messaging targeting renovators should be considered.
- Property managers believe asbestos removal is likely to be a commercial decision for property owners rather than risk-based. Tools should be developed and promoted to assist the commercial sector in considering return on investment.