

- **DO** get the material tested by a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratory if you are unsure if it contains asbestos
- **ALWAYS** ensure the ACM is thoroughly wet down and kept wet during your work to minimise the release of asbestos fibres and/or dust.

Asbestos-containing materials like corrugated roofing or cladding can still be found on many of the older workshops and associated buildings. These materials may be in a poor deteriorated condition so care needs to be taken when doing maintenance on those buildings.

For more information, contact the work health and safety regulator in your state or territory.

## For further information

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency  
[www.asbestossafety.gov.au](http://www.asbestossafety.gov.au)

National Association of Testing Authorities  
[www.nata.com.au](http://www.nata.com.au)

SafeWork Australia  
[www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)

Some photos in this document are courtesy of  
 Asbestos Audits Queensland

## The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

The agency was established on 1 July 2013 to provide a national focus on asbestos issues which goes beyond workplace safety to encompass environmental and public health concerns. The agency aims to ensure asbestos issues receive the attention and focus needed to drive change across all levels of government.

This brochure was developed with the assistance of the Building, Construction and Demolition Sectors Committee established by the agency.

 @AsbestosSafety  
 Asbestos-Safety-and-Eradication-Agency  
[www.asbestossafety.gov.au](http://www.asbestossafety.gov.au)



## Asbestos awareness information for the automotive industry

# Safety tips

Keep a cartridge half face mask (P2) and some additional paper (P2) disposable masks on hand in your toolbox as backups which you can dispose of appropriately later. Ideally, you should be clean shaven to ensure the mask fits properly and does not leak.

Keep some important equipment in your work vehicle like a water spray bottle (with PVA glue mixture), disposable overalls, gloves, a 200 micron thick plastic bag and duct tape to seal the waste material. That way you are not leaving the asbestos-containing waste lying around to cause the next person to be exposed to dangerous asbestos fibres.

If you work at a premises or a mobile workshop, consider setting up a container such as an empty drum with a lid or other suitable container lined with plastic (200um available from industrial suppliers) so that all brake shoes, linings, clutch plates, gaskets and seals can be disposed of as potential asbestos-contaminated waste.

Try not to give in to the “she’ll be right this time” mindset in order to get a job done faster. Even though the asbestos fibres that can harm you are invisible to the human eye, they are there and you can easily take them home with you to your family!

If you have to handle or work with asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), it is important to remember:

- **DO NOT** use power tools
- **DO NOT** use abrasive cutting or sanding discs
- **DO NOT** use compressed air high-pressure water hose or brooms to sweep the waste up
- **DO NOT** walk on corrugated asbestos-cement roofs as you may run the risk of falling through
- **DO NOT** leave ACMs where they may be broken or crushed allowing fibres to escape into the air or into the environment
- **DO NOT** cover it over as this only hides it which could result in someone accidentally cutting into it



**Mechanics can be exposed to asbestos in almost any type of vehicle anywhere from small kit all terrain buggies to huge coal excavators and trucks at a mining site.**

## Why is it important to be aware of asbestos when working as a mechanic?

Asbestos causes cancer - the most common are lung and mesothelioma. Sometimes, even short exposures can cause disease.

If a car or vehicle was manufactured prior to 2003, it is likely to contain some form of asbestos material.

Potential exposure to asbestos can occur when working with seals, gaskets or dust from friction parts. Make sure replacement parts are asbestos free - the packaging should indicate this.



*Images: examples of some areas that auto mechanics should be aware of. Please be aware that these examples should not be taken as an exhaustive list.*

## Where is asbestos found in typical Australian vehicles?

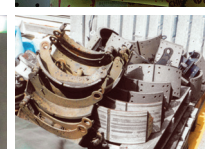
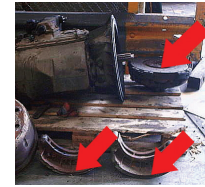
The most common parts of vehicles still containing asbestos in Australia are:

- brake pads, linings and wheel rims
- clutch plates and housings
- seals & gaskets.

Historically, asbestos was also used in a number of other areas including:

- pipe wrap insulation (lagging)
- insulation to exhaust systems (flat & rope)
- plastic asbestos parts (seat bases, battery holders)
- underbody or soundproofing (under floor pan, rear parcel shelf, boot, under bonnet).

Since the 2003 ban, asbestos is most commonly found in old vehicles and imported cars from countries where asbestos is not banned (e.g. China).



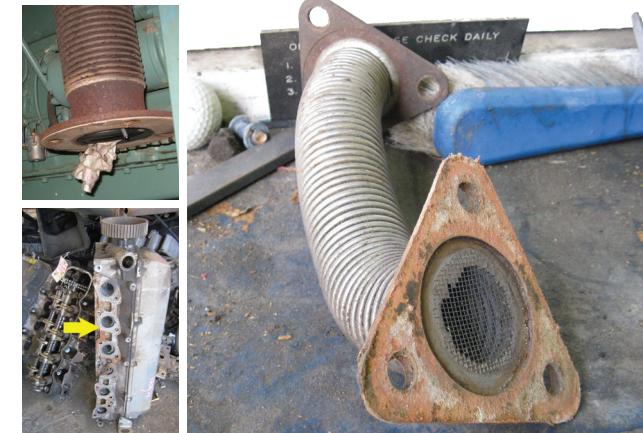
## How do I know whether something contains asbestos?

It is not possible to determine whether a material contains asbestos simply by looking at it. The only way to be sure is to get a sample of the material tested. If asbestos is suspected, treat the material as if it contains asbestos until it is tested by a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratory. These laboratories can be found listed on their website at [www.nata.com.au](http://www.nata.com.au).

Engage an experienced professional to take samples of suspected asbestos material for you. If samples are to be taken, make sure that you first familiarise yourself with the steps and safety requirements outlined in the guidance available at [www.asbestossafety.gov.au/importing-advice/importing-samples-testing](http://www.asbestossafety.gov.au/importing-advice/importing-samples-testing) or refer to the *Model Code of Practice - How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace* published by Safe Work Australia [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-how-manage-and-control-asbestos-workplace](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-how-manage-and-control-asbestos-workplace)

## What should I do if asbestos is present?

Asbestos material in good condition does not pose a significant health risk, however it should be monitored over time to detect any deterioration or changes in its condition. You must not drill, cut or sand asbestos-containing materials.



For removal of more than 10m<sup>2</sup> of asbestos-containing material, a licence is required.

For information on non-licensed removal work with bonded asbestos (less than 10m<sup>2</sup>), please refer to the *SafeWork Australia Model Code of Practice - How to Safely Remove Asbestos*.

## What are some of the common mechanics activities I need to take care with?

Removing and replacing gaskets and clutch and brake linings are the biggest hazards for mechanics as is sanding or cleaning out asbestos-containing dust.

Asbestos can be friable or non-friable. Friable means you can break it up with just your fingers. For example new asbestos brake pads may be non-friable but when removing them after wear they and the associated dust can be friable.

