

Industrial fans disturbing material and spreading contamination

If damaged or friable asbestos material is present, do not use industrial drying fans in the area until the asbestos has been removed and the area has been certified as clear of any remaining asbestos risks. Using fans in an area where damaged or airborne asbestos is present can result in widespread contamination which not only increases the danger to yourself and others nearby, but also results in a costly clean-up.

Asbestos and clean up following natural disasters and fire damage

Natural disasters like floods, cyclones and bushfires can cause major damage to property. The likelihood of asbestos containing materials being disturbed during these events is high, resulting in the potential release of asbestos fibres.

The disaster recovery plan prepared by your state and territory government regularly includes contingencies and funding to clean up asbestos following an emergency. It is important that you

follow instructions issued by the disaster recovery agencies, as they are developed specifically to prevent unnecessary exposure to asbestos fibres resulting from damaged materials.

Following an event, control of the site will usually return to the owner of the building. If you suspect that asbestos might be present, an assessment should be arranged prior to commencing any restoration work on the property. This assessment should be undertaken by an experienced asbestos assessor or an occupational hygienist. Contact the work health and safety regulator (www.asbestossafety.gov.au/organisation-links) in your state or territory for advice on the assessment and clearance process.

If damaged asbestos is present and likely to pose a health risk, you should put up warning signs cautioning people from entering the boundaries of the property. An existing fence around the property boundary may be used to affix them. If signage is not sufficient to keep people out of the debris zone, consider erecting a fence (which can include temporary fencing) until the risk has been removed.

What are the legal requirements when working with asbestos?

- You must not dispose of asbestos waste in domestic garbage bins
- You must not re-use or recycle asbestos products
- You must not dump asbestos products
- You must not use power tools that generate dust
- You must not water blast asbestos cement sheeting and roofing
- 10m² or more of bonded asbestos must be removed by a Class B asbestos removalist
- All friable asbestos must be removed by a Class A asbestos removalist
- All asbestos must be legally disposed of at a landfill site licenced to accept asbestos waste. A list of licenced facilities can be found on the agency's website – www.asbestossafety.gov.au/search-disposal-facilities

For further information

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency – www.asbestossafety.gov.au

National Association of Testing Authorities – www.nata.com.au

SafeWork Australia – www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au

Some photos in this document are courtesy of asbestosawareness.com.au



The Asbestos Safety and Eradication 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.



The Specialised Cleaning & Restoration Industry Association Inc. (SCRIA Inc.) is a

registered Trade Association, representing the carpet, upholstery cleaning and restoration industries. Our aim is to continually improve the

level of professionalism, training, education and ongoing technical development of the industry whilst providing the consumer with the sound knowledge that employing the services of a SCRIA Inc. member represents quality and professionalism.



Jena Dyco is the leading training provider for the specialised cleaning, restoration and associated industries. Running IICRC (Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification) certified courses, Jena Dyco strives to:

- Provide the highest quality of training to the industry
- Help customers grow their businesses
- Offer ongoing technical support
- Actively support and develop the industry

Jena Dyco ensures that the content of their courses is constantly updated to be in-line with industry research and trends. All courses are run by industry experienced instructors, who cater each course to suit the participants' needs. All courses include a comprehensive theoretical and practical component. Training introduces participants to equipment and chemical procedures, practical techniques and problem solving strategies, marketing, customer service and networking opportunities.



Asbestos and the restoration industry

Frequently asked questions

Why is it important to be aware of asbestos when working in the restoration industry?

Asbestos is a known carcinogen, and inhaling asbestos fibres is associated with diseases including pleural disease, asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. Even limited or short-term exposure to asbestos fibres can be dangerous.

If a property was built or renovated before 1990 it is likely to contain some form of asbestos material. Due to its prevalence in Australian homes, it is important to know whether the property you are

working on contains asbestos and how to avoid disturbing it.

Asbestos in good condition that is unlikely to be disturbed poses minimal health risk, however airborne fibres are easily generated either through weathering or from building related activity such as drilling, cutting or sanding. It is important to know whether asbestos is present before you begin work to ensure that it remains undisturbed.

Where is asbestos found in a typical Australian home?

You should familiarise yourself with common asbestos materials and where they are typically found. The following examples show some of the

common asbestos materials found in Australian homes. It is important to note that these examples should not be taken as an exhaustive list.

Outside the house



Fencing



Roofing and guttering



Eaves and downpipes



Sheds



Outbuildings



Electrical meter backing boards

Inside the house



Cement wall linings ...



... behind tiles ...



... and splashbacks in wet areas



Walls



Ceilings



Ceilings



Vinyl and carpet underlay ...



... found in a variety of patterns ...



... and colours

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. We recommend that testing is undertaken by a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratory where possible – visit www.nata.com.au to find a laboratory near you.

We advise that you engage an experienced professional to take samples of suspected asbestos material for you. If you are going to take samples yourself, it is important that you first familiarise

yourself with the steps and safety requirements outlined in the guidance available at www.asbestossafety.gov.au/asbestos-sampling-process or refer to the Safe Work Australia Model Code of Practice -How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace. www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/manage-control-asbestos-cop

If in doubt, assume that the material contains asbestos and treat it accordingly.

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, sand or water blast asbestos containing materials. These types of activities result in the release of unsafe levels of asbestos fibres.

Damaged asbestos material must be removed prior to the start of any restoration work. Any bonded asbestos material greater than 10m² needs to be

removed by a Class B licenced asbestos removalist.¹ All friable asbestos material must be removed by a Class A licenced asbestos removalist. For a list of licence holders, visit the website of the work health and safety regulator in your state or territory.

For information on non-licenced removal work with bonded asbestos (less than 10m²), please refer to the SafeWork Australia Model Code of Practice - How to Safely Remove Asbestos.

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

Water and mould damage to asbestos cement sheeting

You must be extremely careful when cleaning asbestos cement sheeting as even minor damage can result in the release of dangerous fibres. Don't use any abrasive cleaning processes on asbestos materials; including the use of scrubbing, sanding, grinding and water blasting techniques.

Contaminated dust and debris following a fire

Before entering a site, you should first ensure you are wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). If you suspect that asbestos material may have been disturbed during a fire, it is important that samples of dust and materials are taken to determine whether the debris contains asbestos. If the samples come back positive, you must engage a Class A licenced asbestos removalist to safely remove the friable material. Extensive cleaning and air monitoring will be required to ensure the area is safe for occupancy.

During this process, access to the area should be restricted. If people are accessing the area, they are not only potentially exposing themselves to asbestos fibres, but also further disturbing the debris and causing more widespread contamination.

Removal of flooring

Asbestos was commonly used in the backing of vinyl flooring and as carpet underlay. The backing is typically 'felt-like' and was originally used for cushioning purposes. This backing is bonded to the underside of the flooring material, usually with glue.

Particular care needs to be taken with this material as it can contain a high percentage of asbestos and easily release fibres during the removal process if not carried out appropriately. Before removing flooring of this nature, you should first have the material tested. If it is asbestos, engage a licenced removalist to undertake the job.

You must not use sanders or grinders on flooring suspected of containing asbestos as this can generate a large amount of fibres and lead to extensive contamination.

¹ In the ACT ALL asbestos removal work must be undertaken by a licenced removalist.