



Submission Template | Asbestos Safety Training Options for Workers Entering Trades

Submission from: **Anonymous**

Responses to questions posed:

1. Do you agree that asbestos awareness training is required *before* apprentices are at any risk of asbestos exposure? If so, what training do apprentices need?

I feel that asbestos training should be given to new apprentices as soon as possible at the commencement of their apprenticeship. I believe at a minimum it should include awareness, identification, safe handling, and suitable controls for working with asbestos in the construction industry. I would like to see it adopted as a mandatory unit before workers enter a construction work site alongside with unit CPCWHS1001 Prepare to work safely in the construction industry.

2. While all WHS laws impose duties on PCBUs (or equivalents) to provide training, they are not prescriptive about what training needs to be undertaken or who can provide that training, apart from the ACT. Do these laws provide adequate protection to workers at risk of being exposed to asbestos? If not, how could they be improved?

As the type or level of training required is not mandated the responsibility falls to the PCBU to provide adequate training. Some PCBU may unintentionally provide training that is not the most suitable to meet requirements, some may select training on a cost point basis and others may avoid providing training as it is not an area deemed to be high exposure and therefore less important. With no checks or recording of the qualification by a regulator if a worker has no training, they may still undertake the work untrained. Record of training with a regulator should lead to tighter controls and ability to enforce qualification of staff.

3. In your state or territory do the current asbestos training provisions in WHS regulations and codes provide enough information to determine what 'suitable and adequate' training means for asbestos related jobs?

I do not feel either the NT Worksafe Code of Practice – how to manage and control asbestos in the workplace, or how to safely remove asbestos, provide clarity on suitable and adequate training options for the PCBU. A list of dot points identifies considerations in the training however no specific training units or providers of training are nominated.



4. If further prescription about training is desirable, are there particular occupations which should be targeted (see for example the list at Appendix 1 setting out the occupations listed under the ACT legislative scheme).

The ACT requirements seem very appropriate and would be a good discussion point for acceptance at a national level.

5. Is nationally recognised training generally preferable to non-accredited courses to meet PCBU duties for workers entering trades who may be exposed to asbestos? Why?

For some nationally recognised training is preferred and would be beneficial for those who employ from other states or jurisdictions. If the asbestos training was incorporated into the training of nationally recognised trade qualifications, then I feel this would be well received by many in industry. Why? – nationally recognised training implies quality training being delivered by RTO's who meet minimum standards for training delivery and operation.

6. Do some PCBUs find choosing asbestos training difficult given the range of choice and the need to ensure training meets duties under WHS laws? Why? Do small businesses face any particular challenges in this regard?

To clearly know what is required, suitable and acceptable can be difficult. Whether nationally recognised training is needed or if unaccredited training will suffice. This can be caused by the lack of clear requirements from the Code of practices. Costs and time incurred for this training is a challenge for small businesses particularly where it may be such a small part of the business work. The safety of the employee should still be a priority so combining this training into another area that is already being studied would help to see this as a standard requirement and not an additional requirement with extra costs etc.

7. Which of the options at 6.1 – 6.5, if any, do you support or not support and why? (You may wish to rank the options in order of preference).

My preference is-

6.5 mandatory, 6.2 add core unit, 6.3 encourage WHS regulators specify req's, 6.4 WHS regulators to provide approved courses & RTOs, 6.1 status quo

As a former leading hand/manager, now, plumbing trade trainer I feel it would be most beneficial to all new apprentices as part of their WHS training within their apprenticeship. To take it one step further, having asbestos training mandatory before commencing in the construction industry similar



to the unit CPCCWHS1001 Prepare to work safely in the construction industry, I believe would be beneficial to capture all those entering the industry who are not undertaking an apprenticeship also.

8. Are there other levers which could be used to ensure all workers entering trades who may be exposed to asbestos receive adequate asbestos safety training?

As above.

9. Are there any other issues you would like to comment on regarding the adequacy of asbestos safety training especially for workers entering trades where they may be exposed to asbestos?

Prior to taking up my role as plumbing trade trainer, I undertook an unaccredited online asbestos awareness course to meet the requirements for my workplace. While it “ticked a box” for my situation the training did not feel very comprehensive, and I would have preferred a formal training program to participate in which was nationally accredited. A lot of my training was on the job and referencing the Code of practice to meet WHS and stakeholder requirements.