

Quick Reference Guide:

Actions your council can take on illegal disposal of asbestos



Australian Government
Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

The asbestos waste journey helps councils identify exposure risks by describing how asbestos travels through our communities. Understanding the barriers to safe and lawful disposal in each of the asbestos waste journey risk zones can enable councils to **take the right actions at the right time** to prevent illegal disposal of asbestos-containing material (ACM).

Asbestos Waste Journey Risk Zones



Awareness

being unaware asbestos is present, to actually encountering asbestos and becoming aware



Removal

preparing for removal of asbestos and packaging asbestos prior to disposal



Disposal

transporting asbestos waste to either a legal or illegal disposal site



Expand CAPABILITY

Boost community understanding

- Website links to the relevant government asbestos website for your state/territory
- Website architecture changes to accentuate asbestos awareness information, such as health risks, where ACMs are in the home, the role of asbestos professionals
- Community asbestos awareness campaigns via social media or through residential mailouts/inserts e.g. [National Asbestos Awareness Week](#)
- Training for council workers in asbestos awareness

- Website architecture changes to accentuate asbestos handling and removal information
- Community awareness campaigns focused on ACM handling and removal via social media or through residential mailouts/inserts
- Asbestos assessment training and licensing for council workers
- Community information and training sessions on safely and lawfully preparing small amounts of ACMs for disposal

- Website architecture changes to accentuate asbestos packaging, transport and disposal information
- Community awareness campaigns focused on ACM disposal (particularly the risks posed by disposal in household and skip bins) via social media or through residential mailouts/inserts
- Illegal asbestos disposal incidents, locations and how to report it shared through social media and letterbox flyers
- Signage at 'hotspots' of consequences of illegal disposal
- Surveillance and ACM detection skills training for council staff



Increase OPPORTUNITY

Support the right action and set expectations

- Free or low-cost asbestos inspections for residents
- Free or low-cost household asbestos sample kits
- Direct people to asbestos professionals and explain how to arrange an asbestos assessment on your website
- Demolition and development approval processes to include asbestos requirements in houses built before 1990
- Asbestos awareness information shared with new residents

- Information campaigns to encourage or empower residents to report any unsafe removal/demolition practices
- Increase council capacity to respond to reports of unsafe removal/demolition practices
- Development applications to include licensed asbestos removal and clearance certificates requirements
- Challenge the poor safety culture of some building professionals

- Website link to [ASEA asbestos facilities search tool](#)
- Free or reduced cost asbestos waste disposal
- Install physical barriers at illegal disposal 'hotspots'
- Collection service for limited amounts of correctly prepared asbestos waste
- Form regional partnerships with other councils to increase options for community asbestos waste disposal
- Increase requirements to prove safe and lawful disposal



Build MOTIVATION

Reduce enticements and excuses, appeal to personal and social responsibility

- Challenge inaccurate asbestos beliefs and deliver persistent communications with key messages like:
 - Many homes built before 1990 contain asbestos
 - Asbestos can be anywhere inside or outside the home
 - It is best to leave asbestos removal and disposal to an asbestos professional
 - Asbestos waste must be disposed of at a licensed site
 - Think twice about asbestos when planning home renovation work

- Deliver persistent communications with key messages like:
 - The World Health Organisation says there is no known safe level of exposure to asbestos
 - There are benefits of ACMs being managed by licensed professionals
 - ACMs should only be removed by licensed people
 - Guidance is available on how to find and engage licensed removalists
 - Removal costs may be less than you think

- Publicise asbestos waste disposal options and reduce barriers to safe and lawful disposal i.e. costs, opening hours
- Change perceptions of licensed waste facilities away from 'dumps' or 'tips'
- Maintain persistent surveillance, compliance and enforcement
- Raise awareness of penalties for non-compliance and publicise successful enforcement of laws
- Hotspot monitoring, clean-up, landscaping, and beautification

Quick Reference Guide:

Principles for developing actions on illegal disposal of asbestos



Australian Government
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There are actions that all councils should take, no matter how small or limited in resources, to prevent illegal disposal of asbestos.

Every action taken at a local level by councils is a positive step in ensuring the health and safety of their workers and the community.

1

Small actions can have a big impact

Doing nothing is not an option

2

Increase the local focus on asbestos

Raise the profile within your council first

3

Build into 'business-as-usual'

Councils are expected to be a source of information and guidance on asbestos

4

Be strategic

Develop a focused strategy with clear objectives

5

Address known barriers to behaviour

Target the things getting in the way of safe and lawful disposal

6

Consider all zones of the asbestos waste journey

Different strategies will be effective in different zones

7

Dedicate human resources to the issue

Harness the experience and perspectives of a multidisciplinary team

8

Consult and share

Seek support from senior management and share knowledge with council colleagues

9

Be alert to unintended consequences

Consider all potential consequences of actions taken

10

Be consistent and persistent

Persisting with strategies will have impact over time

Sometimes people do not always act safely and lawfully when dealing with asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), due to powerful **barriers** that get in the way.

The **COM-B** behavioural change framework helps to identify and understand these barriers:



CAPABILITY barriers exist when people do not have the awareness, knowledge and skills to act safely and lawfully



OPPORTUNITY barriers exist when the physical and social context does not support people to act safely and lawfully



MOTIVATION barriers exist when people are not consciously or unconsciously propelled to act safely and lawfully

Key messages

Ensuring beliefs and actions align

Councils should align their actions with what they believe is effective to combat illegal disposal of asbestos

Prevention is the key

Actions targeting the awareness and removal risk zones earlier in the asbestos waste journey can prevent illegal disposal of asbestos

Benefits of early intervention

Actions focused on surveillance, enforcement and clean-up miss the opportunity to prevent illegal disposal of asbestos happening in the first place