

# How to Safely Remove Asbestos

## Code of Practice Fact Sheet



Government  
of South Australia  
SafeWork SA

The *Code of Practice – How to Safely Remove Asbestos* is available on the SafeWork SA website at [safework.sa.gov.au](http://safework.sa.gov.au). This fact sheet provides a summary of that Code.

Despite being banned from use in South Australia for many years, asbestos remains an ongoing threat to public health. There are two forms of asbestos:

- friable asbestos – which means material that is in a powder form or that can be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to a powder by hand pressure when dry, and contains asbestos
- non-friable asbestos – which is material containing asbestos that is not friable asbestos, including material containing asbestos fibres reinforced with a bonding compound.

### Asbestos registers

An asbestos register is a document that lists all identified (or assumed) asbestos in a workplace.

Before commencing any licensed asbestos removal work, the licensed asbestos removalist must obtain a copy of the asbestos register for the workplace.

*Refer to page 15 of the Code for more information.*

For more detailed information on asbestos registers, refer to the *Code of Practice – How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace*.

### Licence requirements for removing asbestos

Without a licence, a person is only permitted to remove 10m<sup>2</sup> or less of non-friable asbestos-containing material (ACM) – which is approximately the size of a small bathroom – or associated dust or debris.

There are two types of asbestos removal licences: Class A and Class B. The type of licence required depends on the form and quantity of asbestos or ACM that is being removed at a workplace.

- Friable asbestos materials must be removed by a Class A asbestos removal licence holder.

- A Class B licence holder can remove any amount of non-friable asbestos.

*Refer to pages 6–7 of the Code for more information and examples of the licence requirements for different types of asbestos removal work.*

### Asbestos removal control plans

An asbestos removal control plan, which helps ensure that asbestos removal is well planned and carried out in a safe manner, is similar to a job safety analysis (JSA), but focused on the specific control measures necessary to minimise any risk from exposure to asbestos.

A plan is only required to be prepared for licensed asbestos removal work and must be prepared before the licensed asbestos removal work commences. If you engage a removalist for licensed asbestos removal work, ensure they have a plan and provide you with a copy.

*Refer to page 15 of the Code for more information and Appendix A on page 55 for the contents of an asbestos removal plan.*

### Controlling the risk

There are a number of measures used to control the risk to workers and others associated with asbestos removal, including:

- limiting access, displaying signs and installing barricades
- decontamination procedures
- respiratory protective equipment (RPE)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- air monitoring.

*Refer to pages 23–39 and 53–54 of the Code for more information.*

Air monitoring is required when licensed asbestos removal is being carried out by either a Class A or Class B licence holder.

Page 19 of the Code states that air monitoring is not required when removing more than 10m<sup>2</sup> of non-friable asbestos. However this is not the case in South Australia. Air monitoring is required for all licensed asbestos removals.

*Refer to page 54 of the Code for details on control measures for removing asbestos in plant and pipes or pits e.g. gaskets reinforced with asbestos used in plant and equipment between flanges on pipes to control the temperature and pressure.*

## Tools and equipment

There are certain tools and equipment suitable for asbestos removal work. Others that generate dust are prohibited from use.

*Refer to pages 27–29 of the Code for more information.*

## Decontamination and disposal

Decontamination for the work area, workers, PPE and tools used in asbestos removal work is an important process in eliminating or minimising exposure to airborne asbestos fibres, particularly to persons outside the asbestos removal work area. To determine the appropriate decontamination procedure, the risks of each individual asbestos removal job should be assessed.

Special care must also be taken with the disposal and transport of removed asbestos.

*Refer to pages 32–38 of the Code for more information on decontamination and pages 39–42 for more information on waste containment and disposal of asbestos.*

## Personal protective equipment

An asbestos removalist must provide all workers with PPE that is suitable for asbestos removal work. Workers must use the PPE given to them by the asbestos removalist, and it must be worn at all times during the work in the asbestos removal area.

PPE includes clothing (e.g. coveralls, gloves and safety footwear) as well as RPE. The appropriate PPE can be determined by conducting a risk assessment.

*Refer to pages 30–33 of the Code for more information.*

## Air monitoring and clearance inspection

A person commissioning licensed asbestos removal work must ensure that an independent licensed asbestos assessor conducts any air monitoring.

Once the licensed asbestos removal work has been completed, clearance inspections and clearance certificates must be issued before the workplace can be re-occupied.

Class A work must be inspected and cleared by an independent licensed asbestos assessor. Class B work may be inspected and cleared by an independent competent person.

*Refer to pages 18–21 of the Code for more information.*

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1300 365 255  
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