



RANDWICK CITY COUNCIL

# Asbestos policy

Adopted 13 September 2005

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## Aims of this policy

This policy has been developed to address the potentially serious health hazard posed during the demolition or removal of asbestos material.

The policy aims to protect the health and safety of the community and site workers when carrying out demolition and building works involving asbestos products, by ensuring detection of asbestos prior to commencement of any development works and compliance with WorkCover requirements.

The policy also aims to ensure that asbestos is removed correctly to prevent contamination of land and costly remediation works.

Compliance will be achieved through strict conditions of consent and enforcement where necessary.

The policy applies to developments and renovations involving asbestos via the implementation of conditions of development consent and/or through Council's regulatory processes.

## Definitions

*asbestos* - means the fibrous form of those mineral silicates that belong to the serpentine or amphibole groups of rock-forming minerals, including actinolite, amosite (brown asbestos), anthophyllite, chrysotile (white asbestos), crocidolite (blue asbestos) and tremolite.

*asbestos work* - means work undertaken in connection with a construction or demolition work process in which exposure to asbestos may occur and includes any work process involving the use, application, removal, mixing or other handling of asbestos or asbestos-containing material.

*bonded asbestos material* - means any material (other than friable asbestos material) that contains asbestos.

*bonded asbestos removal work* - means work in which bonded asbestos material is removed, repaired or disturbed.

*friable asbestos material* - means any material that contains asbestos and is in the form of a powder or can be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to powder by hand pressure when dry.

*friable asbestos removal work* - means work in which friable asbestos material is removed, repaired or disturbed.

## **PART A - GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **What is asbestos?**

Asbestos is the name given to a group of fibrous silicate minerals that occur naturally in the environment. It was commonly used in many building materials between the 1940's and late 1980's because of its durability, fire resistance and excellent insulating properties. It was also used in brakes, clutches and gaskets of many cars.

The presence of asbestos only poses a risk if it is:

- Broken
- In poor or deteriorated condition or
- Disturbed during activities that produce dust containing asbestos fibres.

The main types of asbestos are:

- Chrysotile (commonly known as white asbestos)
- Amosite (brown/off-white asbestos)
- Crocidolite (blue asbestos)

The above types of asbestos are considered to be hazardous, very hazardous to highly hazardous, respectively.

### **Potential health hazards**

Asbestos fibres are made of very fine fibrils and can be a health risk if airborne, as inhalation is the main way fibres enter the body. However, small amounts of fibres may be present in the air all the time and are breathed by everyone without causing ill effects.

Generally the presence of asbestos in home building materials does not pose a risk to health unless the material is broken, deteriorating or disturbed in such a way that dust containing asbestos fibres is produced.

Those who suffer health effects from exposure are usually people who have worked in industries involving prolonged exposure to asbestos products and materials. However, as the level of exposure that may cause health effects is unknown, exposure to asbestos fibres or dust containing asbestos fibres should always be kept to a minimum.

The most dangerous fibres are those that are invisible to the naked eye as they penetrate the deepest part of the lung. The larger fibres tend to be removed by the normal clearance mechanism of the throat and lungs.

The risk of inhaling fibres depends on the product in which the asbestos is used. Fibres in a stable 'matrix' material such as bonded in asbestos cement sheeting (fibro) are unlikely to become airborne and therefore are not a significant risk to human health, if managed appropriately. Fibres are more likely to be released from non-bonded materials including sprayed on insulation and pipe lagging, especially if the product is damaged.

Inhalation of asbestos fibres brings a risk of asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. Asbestos-related diseases have a delay period of 20 to 40 years between exposure, onset of symptoms and detection of the disease. These diseases are generally associated with long-term exposure to asbestos in an occupational setting, such as mining, milling and manufacture or installation of asbestos products.

*Asbestosis* is the scarring of lung tissue that can result from the inhalation of substantial amounts of asbestos over a period of years. Results in breathlessness and in some cases early death.

*Lung Cancer* is related to the amount of fibre inhaled and is increased in persons who also smoke cigarettes.

*Mesothelioma* is a cancer of the outer lung lining or of the lining of the abdominal cavity.

Although asbestos fibres may cause the above diseases, this does not automatically mean that your health is at risk if your home is made from asbestos products. Studies have shown that these products, if maintained in a good condition and are not disturbed or damaged, are not a significant health risk.

## Where can asbestos be found in the home?

Asbestos fibres may be found either firmly or loosely bound in a number of products once used in the Australian building industry.

### **Bonded Asbestos ('non-friable' asbestos)**

Bonded asbestos material is any material that contains asbestos in a bonded matrix. It may consist of Portland cement or various resin/binders and cannot be crushed by hand when dry.

Asbestos cement products that may be found around the home include:

- Asbestos cement sheeting, flat or corrugated (commonly known as fibro),
- Water, drainage or flue pipes
- Roof shingles
- Imitation brick cladding.

Bonded asbestos products may be found in any home or building built between approximately the 1920's and 1987.

### **Friable Asbestos**

Friable asbestos material is any material that contains asbestos and is in the form of a powder or can be crumbled, pulverized or reduced to powder by hand pressure when dry.

Examples of friable products are:

- Ceiling insulation (mainly in commercial buildings)
- Millboard, pipe and boiler lagging

- Acoustic insulation and fire protective coatings

Any asbestos cement product, which has been subject to weathering, damage, hail or other mechanical action or inappropriately buried (not in accordance with environmental legislation) is considered friable asbestos material.

*An Asbestos Removal Contractor requires a WorkCover NSW AS1 Licence for the removal of friable asbestos.*

### Typical location of Asbestos products in the home



Fig 1: Ceiling lining in laundry



Fig 2: Asbestos cement sheeting under eaves & gables



Fig 3: Eave linings



Fig 4: Asbestos cement sheeting under tiles

### What does asbestos look like?

It is often difficult to identify the presence of asbestos by eye. As a general rule, certain building materials installed before the late 1980's may contain asbestos. Only fibro products made before 1987 contain asbestos.

Identification of asbestos is best made by a suitably qualified and experienced person, such as an occupational hygienist, licensed asbestos removal contractor or building consultant. However, the only way to be certain is to have a sample analysed by a NATA laboratory that is accredited to identify asbestos. Identification of any asbestos products must be made before any renovation, maintenance or demolition works proceed.

If you do not want to go to the expense of testing to determine if asbestos is present, then the material must be treated as though it contains asbestos.

## Asbestos Checklist

Council recommends a suitably qualified occupational hygienist, licensed asbestos removal contractor or building consultant carry out a thorough inspection of your home or other building should you believe asbestos is present. This checklist is a guide to assist you in locating asbestos before you commence any renovations or building works:

**Table 1.1 – Residential premises**

Location	Specific materials and locations
Bathroom, Toilet and Laundry	Asbestos cement (AC) sheet walls (i.e. behind tiles in wet areas), ceilings and floors (commonly known as fibro)
Kitchen	Vinyl floor tiles, the backing to cushion vinyl flooring and underlay sheeting for ceramic tiles
Living areas	Insulation in wood heaters, AC sheeting beneath wood heater hearths
Backyard	Garages, carports and garden sheds
Exterior	Lining under eaves, flat, patterned and corrugated wall and roof sheeting and imitation brick cladding. Also in fence panels and corrugated AC roof sheeting.
Other	Electrical meter boards, insulation to hot water pipes and brake and clutch linings

**Table 1.2 – Commercial premises**

Location	Specific materials and locations
Wet Areas bathrooms etc	Asbestos cement (AC) sheeting behind tiles in wet areas
Fire doors	Within the fire door
Piping	Lagging on water pipes, asbestos cement piping (eg. heater flues)
Walls and roofs	Flat, patterned or corrugated AC sheeting used for walling and roofing. Bituminous waterproof membrane on flat roofs
Other	Electrical switchboards and duct heater units. Lift motor rooms and asbestos rope/fabric in expansion joints (eg heater and other exhaust flues) and insulation

## **What should I do if I find asbestos?**

In many cases the presence of asbestos-containing building materials in the home is no cause for alarm and these materials can be left in place. For example, internal asbestos sheet walls or ceilings that are in good condition and coated with paint do not pose a risk to health. If you are undertaking any demolition or renovation works you must ensure that you comply with all of WorkCover NSW requirements for handling or removing asbestos. Remember any damaged or broken asbestos must be removed as it poses a health hazard due to asbestos fibres being released.

Demolition, renovation and building works may require the consent of Council, therefore it is important to check with Council before commencing any demolition works or renovations. If you are submitting a Development Application (DA) to Council to carry out your demolition works or renovations, refer to Part B of this policy, which details DA submission requirements and standard conditions of consent.

## **Can I remove asbestos from my home myself?**

Currently under WorkCover NSW requirements, you do not need a licence to remove less than 10m<sup>2</sup> of bonded asbestos (i.e. fibro sheeting). However, as asbestos poses a potential public health risk it is important that relevant WorkCover and public safety requirements are complied with at all times during demolition, removal, packaging, transport and disposal.

Friable asbestos can only be removed by an Asbestos Removal Contractor, holding an AS1 Licence from WorkCover NSW.

Remember that demolition and renovation and building works may also require Council approval, so please contact Council prior to commencing work. Reference should also be made to Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) for Exempt and Complying Development, for details of work which may be carried out without the consent of Council, subject to specific requirements and limitations.

## **How do I find a suitable contractor?**

For a listing of asbestos removal contractors in your area, please refer to your local telephone directory or the Yellow pages. WorkCover NSW Certification Unit can also provide licence checks on asbestos and demolition contractors.

## **Safe work procedures and requirements**

The following requirements and procedures must be observed at all times when carrying out any demolition, building, renovation or asbestos work:

### **Bonded asbestos**

When handling bonded asbestos material there are number of precautions that need to be observed to minimise the release of asbestos fibres and dust.

***Protect yourself:***

- Ordinary dust masks are not effective in preventing the inhalation of asbestos fibres and dust. Wear a half-face filter respirator fitted with a class P2 filter cartridge, remember the mask must have an airtight fit. (Available from safety supply stores and some hardware stores.)
- Wear disposable coveralls to prevent contamination of any clothing.
- Wear a disposable hat and gloves or thoroughly scrub in decontamination area before leaving site.
- Leave the respirator on until contaminated clothing is removed. Coveralls must be disposed of with other asbestos waste.
- Thoroughly wash your hands, shower and wash your hair after handling asbestos.

***When working outdoors:***

- Keep windows and doors of the house closed and cover air vents to prevent asbestos fibres and dust from entering the building.
- Place heavy duty plastic sheeting on the ground to catch dust, debris and off-cuts of asbestos materials.
- Remove play equipment, personal belongings and vehicles from the work area.
- Keep household members and pets away from the area until all work and clean up is complete.
- Tell your neighbours that they should close their windows and doors while work occurs.
- Don't work with asbestos on a windy day.

***When working indoors:***

- Isolate the area you are working in from the rest of the building. Exterior doors and windows should be left open so as to maximise ventilation.
- Place heavy duty plastic sheeting on the floor to catch all dust, debris and off-cuts of asbestos materials.
- Keep household members and pets away from the area.

***General requirements:***

- Do not use power tools on asbestos products. Only use non-powered hand tools, as these only generate small amounts of dust.
- Gently but thoroughly wet down the material before you start work by lightly spraying with water. Keep it wet while working to reduce the release of fibres and dust. The material may be sealed with PVA sealant, if wetting down increases the risk of the material falling.
- Do not use high-pressure water jets as this may increase the spread of any loose fibres and dust.
- Do not drop or smash or break up asbestos sheeting. Retain in whole sheets wherever possible.
- When removing asbestos sheeting, pull-out any nails first and remove the sheeting with minimal breakage.
- Work in well-ventilated areas where possible.
- Minimise dust by using wet methods or use a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter.
- Use drop sheets to collect debris and dust.
- Stack and wrap the asbestos material in heavy duty plastic sheeting.

- Do not leave asbestos materials lying around the site or building, dispose of them safely to an approved waste facility as soon as possible.
- Dispose of waste and collected dust in plastic bags which are clearly labelled asbestos waste.
- Do not abrade or scrub the surface. Pre-seal with polyvinyl acetate (PVA) sealant, use paint stripper to remove paint instead of sanding.
- Do not walk directly on asbestos cement roofing, as it may be brittle and unsafe.
- Maintain personal and public safety at all times.

### **Friable asbestos**

Only licensed asbestos removal contractors can remove friable asbestos. A permit must be obtained from WorkCover before commencing any work involving friable asbestos.

#### **Notes:**

Please refer to WorkCover NSW guidelines and publications for more detailed information on the removal and disposal of asbestos products. A detailed list of contacts and information is provided at the end of this policy.

The removal of any friable asbestos and or more than 10m<sup>2</sup> of bonded asbestos (i.e. fibro), can only be carried out by contractors holding the appropriate licence from WorkCover NSW.

It is illegal to put any asbestos materials in domestic waste bins. Significant penalties apply under pollution control legislation, including issuing of 'on-the-spot' fines.

### **Cleaning up and packaging asbestos waste**

- Clean up everything and put used overalls and masks into plastic bags for removal with the asbestos waste.
- Clean up any residues remaining in the area using either a wet mop or a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter. (Do not use a domestic vacuum cleaner)
- Keep all asbestos waste damp until it is wrapped in heavy duty thick plastic sheeting, heavy duty thick plastic bags or leak proof containers.
- Store in lined bins or a leak proof container and keep it covered in a secure area.
- Clearly label all containers, packages and bags to identify the contents (i.e. "Caution Asbestos – Do not open or damage – Do not inhale dust").
- Remove the asbestos materials from the site as soon as practicable or arrange for collection by a Department Of Environment and Conservation (DEC) approved disposal authority.

### **Transportation and disposal**

- Asbestos products must not be disposed of in any normal waste bin or skip.

- All asbestos waste must be transported in a covered leak proof vehicle or in a manner approved by the DEC. Refer to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001.
- Asbestos must be disposed of at a site approved by the DEC or an appropriate waste disposal authority.
- Vehicles and their containers must be cleaned before leaving the landfill site.
- WorkCover NSW and Council may require tipping receipts for proof of proper disposal – stating the date and load weight of material disposed.

## Enforcement

Under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act (1997), Council may issue environment protection notices in relation to the handling, storage and disposal of asbestos products.

*Clean-up notices* may direct an occupier of premises at or from which Council reasonably suspects that a pollution incident has occurred, or a person reasonably suspected of causing or having caused pollution, to take clean-up action specified in the notice. This would include the unsatisfactory storage and or disposal of asbestos.

*Prevention notices* can be issued if the appropriate regulatory authority reasonably suspects that any activity has been or is being carried out in an environmentally unsatisfactory manner at any premises or by any person. Prevention notices require that action specified in the notice be taken. There is a right of appeal to the Land and Environment Court.

Fees are also payable to Council, for the issuing of clean-up and prevention notices (Currently \$320.)

For example, Council may issue a notice directing the owner of a property to remove any damaged and broken asbestos for example, a damaged asbestos fence or broken fibro sheeting laying upon the premises.

Council is also able to issue various notices, orders or penalty infringements (on-the-spot fines) in relation to a range of regulatory matters and offences under the Local Government Act 1993 or Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, including failing to comply with the conditions of development consent.

## PART B - DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS AND OTHER APPROVALS

### Application submission requirements

If the property was built prior to 1987 and the proposed demolition or building works require development consent from Council, an Asbestos Survey must be prepared by a suitably qualified person (i.e. an occupational hygienist, licensed asbestos removal contractor, building consultant, architect or experienced licensed building contractor) and be submitted to Council with the development application.

The Asbestos Survey should include the following information (as applicable):

- Name, address, qualifications and experience of the person preparing the Asbestos Survey
- A description of the subject premises and approximate year of construction, including previous additions
- The scope of works to be undertaken in the development application
- Details and scope of the Asbestos Survey
- Details of any asbestos products in the building including, type of asbestos (i.e. white, brown or blue asbestos), nature of the material (i.e. bonded or friable asbestos), description of the material (i.e. fibro sheeting), location of asbestos products (i.e. internal wall linings in the bathroom, laundry and wc), extent and area (m<sup>2</sup>) of asbestos material, a floor plan showing the location of the material, details of the current condition of the asbestos material and any other relevant information.
- Identification of relevant WorkCover NSW requirements and licences required for the removal of the asbestos products
- Any recommendations in relation to the works to be undertaken, including removal (or retention), handling, storage, and disposal of asbestos products.

### **Compliance requirements**

Should asbestos be present, Council will impose a number of relevant conditions on the development application consent, as detailed below. Council will also require a Certificate or Statement, prepared by a suitably qualified person (i.e. an occupational hygienist, licensed asbestos removal contractor, building consultant, architect or experienced licensed building contractor), to be provided to Council upon completion of the works (prior to an Occupation Certificate being issued), which confirms that the relevant requirements and recommendations contained in the Asbestos Survey have been satisfied.

## **PART C – CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

This section covers the conditions and requirements which apply to relevant development applications, exempt development and complying development) involving the demolition or renovation of buildings, if asbestos materials are present in the building.

These requirements aim to protect the health and safety of the community and site workers when carrying out demolition and building works involving asbestos products and to ensure that asbestos is removed correctly to prevent contamination of land.

### ***Standard Conditions and Requirements***

If asbestos materials are present in the building, the following standard requirements are to be complied with (as applicable):

1. The demolition, removal, storage, handling and disposal of products and materials containing asbestos must be carried out in accordance with Randwick City Council's Asbestos Policy and the relevant requirements of

WorkCover NSW and the NSW Department of Environment & Conservation (formerly the Environment Protection Authority), including:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000
  - Occupational Health and Safety (Hazardous Substances) Regulation 2001
  - Occupational Health and Safety (Asbestos Removal Work) Regulation 2001
  - WorkCover NSW Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos
  - Australian Standard 2601 (2001) – Demolition of Structures
  - The Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 and Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 1996.
  - Relevant Department of Environment & Climate Change (DECC) / Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and WorkCover NSW Guidelines  
*A copy of Council's Asbestos Policy is available on Council's web site at [www.randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au) in the Building & Development section or a copy can be obtained from Council's Customer Service Centre.*
2. A Demolition Work Plan must be prepared for the development in accordance with Australian Standard AS2601-2001, Demolition of Structures.

The Work Plan must include the following information (as applicable):

- The name, address, contact details and licence number of the Demolisher/Asbestos Removal Contractor
- Details of hazardous materials, including asbestos
- Method/s of demolition and removal of asbestos
- Measures and processes to be implemented to ensure the health & safety of workers and community
- Measures to be implemented to minimise any airborne asbestos and dust
- Methods and location of disposal of any asbestos or other hazardous materials
- Other relevant details, measures and requirements to be implemented as identified in the Asbestos Survey
- Date the demolition and removal of asbestos will commence

The Demolition Work Plan must be submitted to Council and the Principal Certifying Authority (PCA) if the Council is not the PCA, not less than two (2) working days before commencing any demolition works involving asbestos products or materials. A copy of the Demolition Work Plan must also be maintained on site and be made available to Council officers upon request.

**Note** *it is the responsibility of the persons undertaking demolition work to obtain the relevant WorkCover licences and permits.*

3. A WorkCover licensed demolition or asbestos removal contractor must undertake removal of more than 10 m<sup>2</sup> of bonded asbestos (or as otherwise specified by WorkCover or relevant legislation). Removal of friable asbestos material must only be undertaken by contractor that holds a current friable asbestos removal licence.
4. On demolition sites involving the removal of asbestos, a professionally manufactured sign must be clearly displayed in a prominent visible position

at the front of the site, containing the words 'DANGER ASBESTOS REMOVAL IN PROGRESS' and include details of the licensed contractor. The sign shall measure not less than 400mm x 300mm and the sign is to be installed prior to demolition work commencing and is to remain in place until such time as all asbestos has been safely removed from the site.

5. Asbestos waste must be stored, transported and disposed of in compliance with the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 and the Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 1996.

Asbestos waste must be disposed of at an approved waste disposal depot (refer to the DEC or Waste Service NSW for details of sites). Copies of all receipts detailing method and location of disposal must be maintained on site and be provided to Council officers upon request, as evidence of correct disposal.

6. A Certificate or Statement, prepared by a suitably qualified person (i.e. an occupational hygienist, licensed asbestos removal contractor, building consultant, architect or experienced licensed building contractor), must be provided to Council upon completion of the asbestos related works (prior to an Occupation Certificate being issued), which confirms that the relevant requirements contained in the Asbestos Survey and conditions of consent, in relation to the safe removal and disposal of asbestos, have been satisfied.

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## Notes

The abovementioned standard conditions may be amended, modified or expanded upon, to address the specific application, scope of works, type and nature of asbestos products present, extent of details submitted to Council with the application, or otherwise satisfy the objectives of this policy.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with other legislative requirements contained in the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP's) including SEPP 55 (Remediation of Land) and Council's Contaminated Land Policy in relation to contamination and remediation of land.

Currently, the removal of more than 10m<sup>2</sup> of bonded asbestos or all friable asbestos must be undertaken by a WorkCover licenced contractor in strict accordance with 'WorkCover NSW requirements, guidelines and publications. Council is advised that the area requirement (200m<sup>2</sup>) may be modified in the future and a more stringent requirement will apply. Please check exactly what WorkCover licence requirements apply, prior to carrying out any demolition or renovation works.

### ***Further information***

Please contact Council's Health, Building & Regulatory Services, if you have any questions regarding this policy on 9399 0971 or 9399 0973.

If you have any concerns regarding asbestos removal works, please contact WorkCover NSW or Council's Health, Building & Regulatory Services, as detailed below.

### ***Contact List***

#### **Relevant Authorities**

- WorkCover NSW 13 10 50 [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)
- Randwick City Council (Health, Building & Regulatory Services) 9399 0971 or 9399 0973 [www.randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au)
- NSW Department of Environment & Climate Change 13 15 55 [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)
- NSW Health [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

#### **Publications and Information**

- DIY Safely [www.diysafe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.diysafe.nsw.gov.au)
- Fibro Asbestos – A Home owners and renovators guide [www.nsw.gov.au/fibro](http://www.nsw.gov.au/fibro)
- Randwick City Council website [www.randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au)

#### **Legislation and Codes**

- Acts and Regulations [www.legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au)
- Health and Safety [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)
- Asbestos: Code of practice and guidance notes [www.nohsc.gov.au](http://www.nohsc.gov.au)
- Australian Standards [www.standards.com.au](http://www.standards.com.au)
- WorkCover Information Centre 13 10 50

#### **Asbestos Removalists**

- ARCA (Asbestos Removal Contractors Association) 8586 3521
- Refer to your Yellow Pages Directory (i.e. under Asbestos Removal &/or)

## **Consultants in Occupational Hygiene**

- Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists  
(03) 9335 2577 [www.aioh.org.au](http://www.aioh.org.au)

## **Asbestos Disposal**

- WSN Environmental Solutions (formerly Waste Service NSW)  
(02) 9934 7000 or 1300 651 116 [www.wasteservice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wasteservice.nsw.gov.au) or  
[www.wsn.com.au](http://www.wsn.com.au)
- Department of Environment & Conservation (formerly EPA)  
13 15 55 [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

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