

47. ECO-INFO

Working with and Disposing of Asbestos Cement Products within Wyong Shire

Edited 26/06/03

Introduction

Wyong Shire Council is concerned for the health and safety of both (1) workers involved with demolition and renovation of buildings containing asbestos cement products and (2) neighbouring residents of construction and demolition sites that may, if certain procedures are not followed, be placed at risk from inhaling dangerous asbestos fibres.

This document provides summary safety guidelines for work involving asbestos cement and information on appropriate disposal. This document does not intend to fully outline the requirements for working with asbestos cement. Persons are recommended to consult Workcover NSW for further information. Sources of further information are located at the end of this document.

What is asbestos cement?

A large number of products used in the building and construction industry in Australia have been made from Asbestos Cement. The products include but are not limited to:

- Flat, corrugated or compressed asbestos cement
- Sheeting (fibro)
- Fibro pipes (eg. Water, drainage and flue pipes)
- Roofing shingles and guttering

- Flexible building boards (eg, villaboard, hardiflex, wundaboard, flexiboard)

Asbestos was used in asbestos cement products in NSW up until 1986. New fibrous cement products no longer contain asbestos. Fibrous cement products installed prior to 1987 therefore have high probability of containing asbestos and should be handled as if they do contain asbestos fibres.

Workcover NSW advice is that provided that asbestos cement products are maintained in a good order, they present no health risk. It is only when the material is broken up or handled in a way that may cause dust that the asbestos is released into the air and causes a risk to health. Once asbestos is released into the air, the very fine particles are easily breathed into the lungs. These fine particles can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma, which are serious debilitating diseases affecting the lungs and in some cases leading to death.



Procedures for Care when Working with Asbestos Cement Materials

As mentioned above, risks to health are encountered when working with stabilised asbestos, only when the material containing the asbestos is handled in such a way so as to allow the asbestos fibres to be released eg. Use of power tools, breaking of sheets, etc.

Whenever dealing with asbestos cement products you should:

- Wear coveralls (without Velcro seals), and a suitable respirator.
- Use non-powered hand tools, as powered hand tools create more dust.
- Whenever asbestos material is encountered, wet the material lightly to prevent dust from escaping - use a hose to dampen fibro / insulation etc. High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters may be used to reduce the amount of dust. DO NOT use household vacuum cleaners for this purpose.
- Use drop sheets to collect any debris that may result from the removal or movement of asbestos materials.
- If any dust is collected, place in plastic bags that are clearly labelled **asbestos waste**.
- Do not abrade or scrub the surface of any asbestos-containing material. Pre-seal with polyvinyl acetate (PVA) sealant. Use paint stripper to remove paint.

Guidelines for Removal of Asbestos Cement Products

When removing asbestos-containing materials from buildings or other structures, the above precautions should be taken, in addition to the following:

N.B:- Certain asbestos removal work can only be conducted by an asbestos removalist licensed by Workcover NSW. Further advice should be sought from Workcover NSW.

- For external work, close all windows and doors on the building
- Gutters on asbestos cement roofs are to be wet cleaned and all contaminated materials must be collected and disposed of appropriately
- Asbestos cement sheeting should have the bolts or screws removed and then the sheets removed with minimal breakage. Asbestos cement products are not to be thrown into bins or onto the ground, they are to be lowered or moved as whole sheets where possible.
- Asbestos cement sheeting is to be wrapped in 200µm (micro-metre) plastic sheeting, sealed and transported to the waste facility as soon as possible to prevent any further damage to the sheeting from being left on site.
- Building skips may be used, provided that the internal surface is lined with 200µm plastic sheeting, and the load securely covered and sealed before transporting to a waste facility.

How to Dispose of Asbestos Cement Materials

Asbestos wastes must be disposed of at landfills licensed by the NSW Environmental Protection Authority. Asbestos cement products should not be reused or used in new work.

The following details outline the disposal of asbestos cement waste at Councils **Buttonderry Waste Management Facility**, located on Hue Hue Road, Jiliby, which is licensed to accept asbestos waste:

- Persons proposing to dispose of asbestos waste at the Buttonderry Waste Management Facility must provide the gatekeeper with a minimum of 24 hours notice of the proposed delivery. The notice must indicate the approximate time of delivery, the type of asbestos waste to be delivered and the approximate tonnage. Where ever possible deliveries should be made prior to 2.00pm, Mondays to Fridays.

Hours of operation are:

7:00am - 5:00pm Mon - Fri

7:00am - 6:00pm Mon - Fri
(daylight savings)

8:30am - 4:30pm Sat & Sun

Please separate asbestos materials from general waste to avoid paying the higher special rate that applies to asbestos on any non-asbestos material.

- All asbestos waste must be transported in a covered, leak proof vehicle.
- Stabilised asbestos must be thoroughly wetted prior to being transported and be contained either in heavy-duty polyethylene bags or wrapped in heavy-duty

polyethylene sheeting. The asbestos waste must be bagged or wrapped in a manner that during the unloading process the polyethylene bags or wrapping are not ruptured or punctured.

- The transporter of asbestos waste and waste containing asbestos is solely responsible for the unloading of the waste and must provide all personal protective equipment necessary for the safe unloading of the waste and for the cleaning of the delivery vehicle after unloading. Council will make available facilities for the cleaning down of delivery vehicles however Council staff are not available to carry out this work.

Careless disposal of asbestos can lead to long-term contamination of land and very expensive ground rehabilitation work. Every possible caution should be taken to prevent the loss or spillage of contaminated waste.

Buttonderry Waste Management Facility can be contacted on: 4353 1571



Further information

Wyong Shire Council
(02) 4350 5555

**Buttonderry Waste Management
Facility**
(02) 4353 1571

Workcover Information Centre
<http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au>
13 10 50

Legislative requirements/health
and safety/publications

Workcover NSW
(02) 9370 5099

Asbestos removal licenses and
list of asbestos removalists

* Occupational Health and Safety Act
2000:

[http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/pdf/
2000-40.pdf](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/pdf/2000-40.pdf)

[http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/html
/reg_31aug2001.asp](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/html/reg_31aug2001.asp)

* Protection of the Environment
Operations Act 1997 (Waste Regulation):

[http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw
/consol_reg/poteor1996609/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_reg/poteor1996609/)

**NB: - ALL ASBESTOS RELATED
COMPLAINTS**

**Workplace complaints concerning
asbestos may be directed through to
Workcover on either of the above
numbers.**