



INFORMATION SHEET

BUILDING SERVICES

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SAFE REMOVAL OF ASBESTOS (NAT)

This information sheet provides an overview of the basic requirements for the safe removal of asbestos that is permitted to be removed by unlicensed persons.

What the law requires

Although States and Territories other than the ACT allow limited amounts of asbestos to be removed by unlicensed persons, this does not mean that unlicensed persons are exempt from the asbestos regulations. They are only exempt from the requirement to be licensed.

Unlicensed removal of asbestos is subject to strict safety conditions similar to those imposed on licensed persons. This is because removing asbestos is a dangerous process that can expose those removing it and others nearby to serious risks to their health and safety if not properly carried out. For this reason you should consider hiring licensed professionals to do the work, even if the removal can be carried out without a licence.

For information on the type and quantity of asbestos that can legally be removed without a licence in each State and Territory refer to HIA Information sheet *“Asbestos Removal Regulations (Nat)”*.

Safe asbestos removal requirements

All States and Territories have a code of practice for the safe removal of asbestos.

All jurisdictions except Victoria and WA have adopted a code of practice that is based very closely on the national *Model Code of Practice How to Safely Remove Asbestos*. This code can be downloaded from: <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/safely-remove-asbestos-cop>

To determine if this model code of practice has been approved as a code of practice in a particular jurisdiction, or to find out what applies check with the relevant regulator.

In Victoria the WorkSafe Victoria publication *Compliance Code: Removing Asbestos in Workplaces (1st Edition September 2008)* outlines the correct procedure for the removal of asbestos. This code can be downloaded from:

<http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/WorkSafe/Home/Forms+and+Publications/Compliance+Code/Removal+of+asbestos+in+workplaces+CC>

In WA the relevant code is *Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos 2nd Edition [NOHSC: 2002 (2005)]*, The code can be downloaded from:

http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/saferemoval_ofasbestos2ndeditionn oh.pdf

DISCLAIMER - The above is intended to provide general information in summary form. The contents do not constitute specific advice and should not be relied upon as such. Formal specific advice should be sought by members with respect to particular matters before taking action.

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Prior to undertaking unlicensed asbestos removal work you must read and understand the code and any applicable local regulations. You must meticulously follow these requirements to protect your health and that of those around you, and to comply with your legal obligations.

You should note that key requirements include:

- appropriate training must be undertaken prior to asbestos removal work. In some jurisdictions records of this training must be kept.
- nearby people must be informed of impending asbestos removal work. Some jurisdictions require that building occupiers, workers or other persons in immediate and adjacent areas be notified prior to commencing asbestos removal work.
- removal must be carried out in a manner that eliminates the release of asbestos fibres as far as reasonably practicable
- appropriate personal protective equipment and facilities to decontaminate clothing, equipment, tools and the work area must be provided
- use of brooms, brushes, power tools and some other instruments may be prohibited
- other prohibitions may apply (e.g. the asbestos must not be stored, sold or re-used)
- equipment used must be de-contaminated or sealed off and disposed of as asbestos waste
- asbestos waste must be adequately contained prior to disposal
- employees may need to undergo medical examinations

Transport and disposal

Some regulations require disposal of asbestos waste as soon as is practicable and/or to a licensed asbestos disposal site. Only certain landfill waste sites may lawfully receive the asbestos waste. It is important to check first. It is illegal to re-use, recycle or illegally dump asbestos or to place it in domestic rubbish bins.

The transport and disposal of asbestos waste may be regulated by the local safety authority and/or the EPA (environment protection agency) and/or the local council. Therefore you should contact each of these authorities to ascertain their specific requirements and approved waste disposal facilities.

For further information HIA members can contact HIA's Building Services staff on 1300 650 620 or hia_technical@hia.com.au.

If you would like to become a HIA member, contact 1300 650 620 or enquiry@hia.com.au