



# INFORMATION SHEET

## BUILDING SERVICES

Ref: HS 10-22A  
Current at: November 2016

### HOME RENOVATIONS & ASBESTOS (NAT)

Do you have asbestos in your house? If you are the owner of a home built between 1950 to 1990 you will most likely find some materials that contain asbestos.

#### Where will I find asbestos in my home?

Materials that contain asbestos were used widely in house construction up to the 1990's. There are many areas in the home where materials that contain asbestos can be found including (but not limited to):

- Internal and external wall sheeting (flat or a weatherboard style)
- roof sheeting and capping
- guttering
- gables, eaves/soffits, water pipes and flues
- imitation brick cladding
- vinyl sheet flooring
- carpet and tile underlays
- backing boards to electrical switchboards
- flexible building boards
- fencing
- carports and sheds
- waterproof membrane
- telecommunications pits
- some window putty
- expansion joints
- packing under beams
- concrete formwork

In Australia the use of asbestos in fibro-cement products was phased out by 1987 but the use of asbestos in some products was not discontinued until 2003.

Asbestos is typically referred to as either friable or non-friable (sometimes referred to as bonded). This will determine whether or not it can be removed without a licence, the type of licence required and the safety provisions that apply for its removal.

- Non-friable (or bonded) - includes material that contains asbestos in a form where the asbestos fibre is held within another material but does not include friable asbestos. An example of non-friable asbestos is where asbestos is 'bonded' within a matrix such as cement or resin/binders, examples are vinyl floor tiles, fibro-cement flat or corrugated wall and roof sheeting and fibro-cement flue, conduit and drainage pipes.
- Friable - is material that contains asbestos which when dry can be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to powder by hand pressure. Examples include sprayed asbestos coating or

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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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insulation, asbestos lagging, loose asbestos and asbestos in its raw form. This may include non-friable asbestos which ends up in this state because of weathering, physical damage or deterioration under its conditions of use.

### **Does it pose a risk?**

Asbestos poses a health risk when it is disturbed so that asbestos fibres are released into the air and breathed in. Both friable and non-friable asbestos can pose significant health risk if the materials are not properly maintained or removed carefully.

### **Working around asbestos**

If you are planning on renovating and believe that your home contains asbestos you must observe the recommended safety precautions, otherwise you risk exposing yourself and your family to long-term health risks. It will depend upon the type of works being undertaken to decide whether the best option is to leave the asbestos in place undisturbed, or to remove it.

### **Removing the asbestos**

Although some State and Territory laws 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.

Each State and Territory also has regulations governing the safe transportation of asbestos waste which you must adhere to. It is regulated by the local safety authority and/or the 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.

### **More Information**

To find out more about asbestos visit <http://asbestosawareness.com.au>

To find out when a licence is required to remove asbestos contact your State or Territory workplace health and safety regulator.

To find a HIA member who holds an asbestos removal licence search the HIA Tradebuild website <http://tradebuild.com.au/search/> for an 'Asbestos Remover'.

**For further information HIA members can contact HIA's Building Services staff on 1300 650 620 or [hia\\_technical@hia.com.au](mailto:hia_technical@hia.com.au).**

If you would like to become a HIA member, contact 1300 650 620 or [enquiry@hia.com.au](mailto:enquiry@hia.com.au)