

Asbestos in Australia

1 IN 3 HOMES IN AUSTRALIA

HAS ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIALS IN THEM.



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Australia has the largest use per person (of asbestos) in the world



Millions of tonnes of asbestos was imported into Australia between 1930 & 1980



Environmental Exposure often is a result of illegal or unsafe asbestos disposal practises.

Prevalence of Asbestos in Australia & the Important Role of Licensed Removalists

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a group of naturally-occurring mineral fibre. It was industrially mined throughout the world owing to its flexibility, strength, fire retardant and insulation capabilities.

The most commonly used types of asbestos are:

Chrysotile (white)

Crocidolite (blue)

Amosite (brown/grey)

There are two types of asbestos:

Non-Friable: materials made of bonded asbestos fibres

Friable: dangerous airborne loose fibres that can be easily pulverised by hand pressure

“ Contrary to popular belief, there is no ‘safe level’ of exposure to loose asbestos fibres ”

History of Asbestos Use in Australia

Australia has the largest use per person of asbestos in the world - owing to the boom in its mining production between the 1930s and 1980s. Mining continued till 1984 and millions of tonnes of asbestos was also imported during this time. An official ban on the importation, mining and use of asbestos in any form was formalised on the 31st of December, 2003.

Asbestos was used in the motoring industry (to manufacture brake pads), the commercial construction industry and in residential properties. This includes materials such as roofing, gutters, carpet and tile underlay, concrete sheeting, wall linings, faux brick cladding, splashbacks, insulation, putty and fire retardant spray.

Due to this boom, 1 in 3 homes in Australia has Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) and 125 million people are exposed to asbestos in the workplace, worldwide.

Why Is Asbestos so Dangerous?

All types of asbestos is dangerous. Contrary to popular belief, there is no ‘safe level’ of exposure to loose asbestos fibres. They remain airborne for long periods and once inhaled, the fibres often ‘hook’ on to the lungs indefinitely.

Continued exposure can cause chronic health issues such as lung disease, asthma and asbestosis. Over time (usually over a span of 20 years), this exposure can also lead to ‘asbestos cancer’ - better known as mesothelioma.

Types of Asbestos Exposure

Direct/Primary Exposure - workers or individuals that work with asbestos containing materials, asbestos mines and manufacturing companies and are exposed to loose fibres on a regular basis.

Secondary Exposure - asbestos fibres carried by a person that works directly with asbestos via their clothes or personal items. These fibres become airborne and often affect people in the same household.

Environmental Exposure - often a result of illegal or unsafe asbestos disposal practices. Loose fibres are often carried away with the wind to nearby surrounds and affects individuals in the area.

Over time exposure to asbestos can result in cancer

THE MOST COMMON DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO ASBESTOS ARE ASBESTOSIS & MESOTHELIOMA



Mesothelioma is a type of cancer that develops from the thin layer of tissue that covers many of the internal organs 80% of cases are the result of exposure to asbestos

Asbestosis is long term inflammation and scarring of the lungs due to asbestos. Complications may include lung cancer, and pulmonary heart disease

How to Identify Asbestos in Your Home

If your home was constructed prior to the 1990s, do not attempt a renovation in your home. This is because identifying asbestos containing materials in your home is a very difficult task. Even trained individuals may not be able to identify all asbestos containing materials. A lab test often indicates the presence or absence of asbestos in a material. Therefore, it is recommended that if in doubt, treat the material as though it is asbestos and contact a licensed removalist.

“ Fire usually circulates the air and spreads loose asbestos fibres within the building ”

Disasters and Storm Damage

Most asbestos containing building materials usually crack and release loose fibres during fires in homes. The burning fire usually circulates the air and spreads loose asbestos fibres within the building. Therefore, entering a fire damaged property is not advisable even after a fire has been extinguished. Disturbance of debris at fire damaged properties will stir up settled loose fibres and should not be entered until a fire damage restoration is complete.

Similar to above, storms may also damage asbestos containing materials. Water damaged building materials become susceptible to cracks and breakages and may sometimes collapse and spread loose fibres throughout the residence. Hail damage, roof collapse, flooding, fallen trees and flying debris during storms are all examples of ways asbestos can be released into the home environment.

Licensed Removalists

Asbestos Removalists are licensed to safely remove asbestos by following strict guidelines to prevent further contamination. There are two types of licence holders:



Class B - This licence type allows its holder to remove more than 10 square meters of bonded asbestos. It is issued to applicants that are able to demonstrate competence and understanding of practices and procedures for correct adherence to the asbestos removal code.

Class A - This is issued to individuals that have completed training and have a high level of understanding of the dangers of friable (loose fibres) asbestos and are competent with safe removal and disposal.

Juvenaire is licensed as both a Class A and Class B removalist. Following the removal and disposal of numerous asbestos containing material; bonded and friable, Juvenaire has extensive knowledge and trained technicians that adhere to strict guidelines set out by the various government agencies to prevent further contamination of the environment.

For more information visit us at:

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