



Asbestos Management Guide

for Caretakers and Property Managers

Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility. The Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016 (Regulations) outline how asbestos should be managed on your school property. The focus of the regulations is preventing exposure to airborne asbestos fibres that can be inhaled. The purpose of this checklist is to ensure you are meeting your duties and obligations under the Regulations. Use it to ensure you are following the correct steps at each point of the process.

Day-to-day management requirements

Check

Identify whether asbestos is present in your school

PCBU's with management or control of a workplace (schools) must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all asbestos or asbestos containing material (ACM) within the school property is identified. As the caretaker or school property manager you are a good person to identify and monitor the condition of asbestos.

If ACM is assumed likely or confirmed to be present:

1 Create an Asbestos Management Plan following the WorkSafe guidance

The school should have developed an Asbestos Management Plan and you should be aware of its contents.

2 Include asbestos in your school Hazard and Risk Register

Include the presence or assumed presence of both friable and non-friable asbestos in your school Hazard and Risk Register and ensure the stated controls are implemented and reviewed regularly.

3 Monitor the condition of identified asbestos

You should schedule regular inspections of ACM and record any changes to the condition in your school's Asbestos Management Plan. Where there is deterioration or damage to material, action must be taken to ensure that fibres are not released, e.g. covering, sealing or removing badly weathered or damaged materials.

Project works requirements

Check

Before you start any work on school buildings that may contain asbestos:

1 Check to see if the material contains asbestos

Review the School Hazard and Risk Register and the School Asbestos Management Plan. If in doubt, assume the material is asbestos.

2 Do not use power tools, waterblast, scrub with a stiff broom, or sand on ACM

Asbestos fibres can be released if power tools are used on ACM. Never water blast ACM. If the material has been accidentally water blasted or has suddenly deteriorated in some way, you will need to call a licensed asbestos contractor.

3 Avoid drilling and cutting ACM

Do not drill holes through eaves, flues or vents. Never cut into asbestos cement sheeting. If an occasional hole is required, mask area with tape, use a non-powered drill and wear a mask. If significant work is required it is advisable to engage a licensed removalist to remove the entire sheet and replace it with non-asbestos material.

4 To prepare a surface for painting

If you need to prepare a surface for painting, gently remove any loose paint with a scraper, keeping the surface wet to minimise the release of any fibres. You can use sugar soap to clean the surface.

5 Update information and registers

Update the school's asbestos information including Asbestos Management Plan and the School Hazard and Risk Register.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if there is asbestos in my school?

There are a number of ways you can identify asbestos, including:

1. If the building was built prior to 1 January 2000 it is likely to contain asbestos containing material and you could assume that your school building contains asbestos.
2. Follow the WorkSafe Approved Code of Practice Guidance to identify what is likely to contain asbestos by conducting a visual inspection. This needs to be carried out by an experienced or competent person which could include your own staff who have undergone appropriate training. Staff should not damage the suspected asbestos in any way when making this determination and correct personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn.

3. Employ a qualified asbestos surveyor to assess your building.

Where can asbestos be found?

See the WorkSafe website for information and posters on where asbestos can be found:

www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/asbestos/working-with-asbestos/where-asbestos-can-be-found/.

What is the difference between friable and non-friable asbestos?

Friable asbestos is in a powder form or is able to be crumbled, pulverised, or reduced to a powder by hand pressure when dry. While all asbestos has the potential to become airborne, friable is more likely to become airborne and is far more of a health hazard and therefore requires more stringent and costly removal practices.

Non-friable asbestos is not in a powder or cannot be crumbled, pulverised, or reduced to a powder by hand pressure when dry. It is usually reinforced with a bonding compound.

When should asbestos be removed?

If the asbestos or ACM is in good condition and undisturbed, it is unlikely that airborne asbestos fibres will be released. In this situation, the risk to health is low.

If asbestos or ACM is found to be in poor condition and there is a risk of exposure to respirable fibres, you will need to take steps to eliminate or minimise the risk. This could include eliminating the risk by removing the asbestos or minimising the risk by encapsulation or other methods.

Where can I find more information and who can I contact?

You can find more detailed information on your requirements on the following websites:

- New Zealand School Property Agency:
www.schoolproperty.govt.nz/day-to-day-management/hazardous-materials-and-substances/managing-asbestos-in-schools
- Worksafe
www.worksafe.govt.nz/asbestos
- Ministry of Health information about the health risks of exposure to asbestos:
www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/environmental-health/hazardous-substances/asbestos

If you are unsure whether you have met the requirements of this advice, please email Schoolproperty.Asbestosmanagement@schoolproperty.govt.nz.