



ASBESTOS INFORMATION

Asbestos containing materials were commonly used in building materials from 1940 until the end of 1980. This was due to their durability, fire resistance and good insulation properties. At the time, the health risks associated with asbestos were not known. Airborne asbestos fibers are extremely hazardous to health and, therefore, it is against the law not to control the risk in homes and workplaces.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland regulate businesses, contractors and occupants of a commercial premises handling or removing asbestos.

Types of asbestos and where you may find it

Asbestos can be broken into two broad categories: friable and non-friable.

Friable

Asbestos containing materials that can be easily reduced to powder when crushed by hand when dry. Friable asbestos has a much greater risk to health as the fibers can easily become airborne if damaged.

Examples of friable asbestos-containing materials include:

- Some sprayed-on fire retardant
- Sound proofing and insulation
- The lining on some old domestic heaters, stoves and hot water systems, and pipe insulation
- The backing of sheet vinyl and linoleum floor coverings
- Thermal insulation

Non-friable (also known as bonded)

Asbestos containing materials in which the asbestos is firmly bonded with other materials. These materials can still become friable asbestos if broken or damaged.

Examples of non-friable asbestos containing materials include:

- Asbestos cement products (flat, profiled and corrugated sheeting used in walls, ceilings and roofs, moulded items such as downpipes)
- Plaster patching compounds
- Textured paint
- Vinyl floor coverings

Health risks

Being around asbestos materials does not necessarily create a health risk if there is no damage to the materials. It is only when fine particles become airborne and are inhaled that you should be concerned.

Activities such as cutting asbestos materials with a power tool and cleaning fibro roofs (containing asbestos) are prohibited as it is difficult to contain the asbestos fibers.

Breathing in asbestos fibers has been linked to three asbestos related diseases:

- Asbestosis
- Mesothelioma
- Lung cancer

Non-Prohibited Activities

Some activities are prohibited as it is difficult to contain the asbestos fibers released.

Prohibited activities include:

- Cutting asbestos materials with a power tool, such as an angle grinder, circular saw or electric sander.
- Cleaning asbestos materials, such as a roof sheeting, with a high-pressure water cleaner.
- Using compressed air or abrasive-blasting asbestos materials.

How to handle, remove and dispose of asbestos

Non-friable asbestos can be handled safely if you use the right procedures.

Sometimes you might need to do minor works, such as drilling in asbestos sheeting, painting or removing wallpaper.

To find out how to do these works safely, read:

- [Asbestos: a guide for minor renovation.](#)

Removal of non-friable asbestos

If you are renovating or removing asbestos from your home, it is strongly recommended you engage a licensed asbestos removal contractor to reduce potential exposure to yourself, your family and your neighbours.

If removing more than 10 square metres of non-friable (bonded) asbestos, you will require a certificate.

Department of Health approved courses that provide a certificate:

- [Module CPCCE3014 - Remove non-friable asbestos](#)
- [Online or face to face homeowner and DIY asbestos removal course.](#)

You will not require a certificate if you are removing less than 10 square metres of non-friable materials containing asbestos. However, you will still need to follow safe work procedures and safety precautions to minimise asbestos fibers getting into the air.

For more information and guidance on safe work procedures and safety precautions refer to [Asbestos: a guide for minor renovation](#).

Removal of friable asbestos

Only holders of an "A" class license can remove friable asbestos (e.g., felt carpet underlay).

They will need to ensure they follow the [How to safely remove asbestos code of practice 2011](#) and [Find a business that holds a class "A" license](#).

Disposal of asbestos

Asbestos is a regulated waste and cannot be disposed of in rubbish bins, recycling bins or at Council's transfer stations. Not all landfills can accept asbestos waste. Visit the Queensland government [Asbestos disposal information](#) page or contact Council to find out where you can dispose of asbestos.



Complaints about asbestos

If you believe a business, contractor or a person at a commercial premises is unsafely handling, removing or transporting asbestos materials, phone [Workplace Health and Safety Queensland](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au) on 1300 362 128.

If you believe a homeowner, occupant or owner-builder is unsafely handling, removing or transporting asbestos material or a person has illegally dumped asbestos waste, contact Council.

Guidelines

Find out more information about handling and removing asbestos:

- [Queensland flood, storm and natural disaster recovery: asbestos - cleaning and/or removing asbestos containing materials](#)
- [Asbestos - a guide for householders and the general public](#)
- [Asbestos and Fire Damaged Buildings](#)
- [Asbestos flooring](#)
- [Cleaning asbestos cement roofs video / fact sheet](#)
- [National Occupational Health and Safety Commission - Code of practice for the safe removal of asbestos](#)
- [How to handle asbestos safely after a storm](#)
- [Is it safe? Cracked, damaged or weathered asbestos cement sheeting](#)

Useful links

- [Queensland Government Asbestos](#)
- [Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency](#)
- [Queensland Legislation](#)
- [Asbestos Awareness](#)