

Asbestos is the generic term for certain fibrous silicate minerals. There are 3 common forms of asbestos: white, brown and blue (mineral names Chrysotile, Amosite and Crocidolite).

Asbestos was used as an additive in many building materials and other products. Examples of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) include: asbestos cement (AC or 'fibro'), AC roofs, AC conduits, meter box backing boards, vinyl floor tiles, vinyl underlay, insulation products, acoustic and fire retardant products, to name just a few.

## Friable ACM

An Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) where the asbestos fibres are not bound together by another stable material. The fibres are usually able to be released into the air with only minimal disturbance, and the material can be crumbled or reduced to powder using just hand pressure.

## Non-Friable ACM

An Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) where the asbestos fibres are bound within another stable matrix. The fibres are generally not free to be released into the air. Examples of Non-Friable ACM include asbestos cement (AC or 'fibro'), vinyl floor tile, or meter box backing boards.

## Asbestos Health Risks

Asbestos exposure occurs via inhalation of airborne asbestos fibres. These fibres can be so fine that they weigh almost nothing and can float in the air indefinitely. The fine fibres can travel past the body's natural defences and make their way deep into the lungs. Once in the lungs, the body sometimes responds negatively to the fibres, and this can result in the following asbestos-related diseases: Lung Cancer, Mesothelioma, Pleural Disease, and Asbestosis.

## Asbestos Management

**Removal** - The preferred management approach as the hazard is completely removed. However the act of removal in itself poses risk. Removal needs to be carefully planned and should only be undertaken by Licensed Asbestos Removal Contractors.

**In-Situ Management** - Encapsulation is the sealing and coating of the material with an appropriate sealant or membrane e.g. PVA coating, Emer-Clad paint or a high-temperature mastic depending on the application. Enclosure is the construction of a permanent solid barrier between the ACM and the environment.

**Asbestos Register** - A register of the known occurrences of ACM within a particular work site or building. The Asbestos Register also assigns a 'Risk Rating' to each occurrence, which allows for better management decisions. Having an accurate Asbestos Register is a legal requirement under Work Health and Safety Legislation. The Asbestos Register must be easily accessible and available to all personnel.

**Asbestos Management Plan (AMP)** - The AMP is a document that describes the intended management approach for asbestos. An AMP steps through what actions are to be taken to manage and eventually remove the ACM. The plan also describes other important planned actions, such as training of the workforce, health surveillance (if required), background air monitoring, or labelling of ACM occurrences.

**PPE** - Respirator (P2 minimum, P3 or better for Friable ACM), disposable coveralls, non-laced boots or boot covers, disposable gloves, disposable wet-wipes and waste bags for decontamination and clean-up.

**Asbestos Air Monitoring** - Air monitoring must be undertaken by a NATA accredited company. Results should always report 'non-detect' or <0.01 f/mL (fibres per mL of air).