

HEALTH

POLICY NO.	H.1
POLICY SUBJECT	Handling of Asbestos Cement (AC) Building Products
ADOPTION DATE	17 December 1998
LAST VARIATION DATE	26 November 2020 (C.05/1120)
LAST REVIEW DATE	26 November 2020 (C.05/1120)

Objective

To establish a safe protocol for dealing with asbestos cement material within the community.

History of Asbestos Cement Products

Asbestos was commonly used in building materials due to its durability, fire resistance and insulation properties and there are a great many developed centres like Bridgetown and Greenbushes that have a considerable volume of asbestos fibre, in the form of asbestos cement products, such as roof sheeting, wall cladding, ceiling material, fencing material, etc.

Asbestos cement products typically contain 10 – 15 percent asbestos fibre by weight, and were commonly manufactured in WA from 1921 to 1987.

The use of crocidolite (blue asbestos), ceased in 1966, use of amosite (brown asbestos) ceased in May 1984 and the use of chrysotile (white asbestos) was phased out between 1981 and 1987.

Manufacturing of all asbestos products ceased in 1987.

Health Effects Caused by Exposure to Asbestos Cement Products

While in its raw form, asbestos is well known to cause health effects in humans, the Department of Health maintain undisturbed asbestos cement products do not pose a health risk, as the fibres are bound together in a solid cement matrix.

The natural ageing, weathering and minor damaging or disturbance of asbestos cement roofs may release a very small number of fibres into the air over time, they are unlikely to pose a risk to health.

Asbestos cement buildings do not present a health hazard in most cases, where the materials are in good condition and are not disturbed, disturbing the material (eg. by removal) may create a health hazard where none previously existed.

Health (Asbestos) Regulations 1992

The *Health (Asbestos) Regulations 1992* controls the handling and use of materials containing asbestos, to protect the public from the uncontrolled release of fibres into the environment.

The regulations also make it an offence to sell, give away or supply second-hand asbestos material.

Recognising Asbestos Products?

Generally, a person cannot determine whether a material contains asbestos simply by looking at it. Careful visual examination and the use of a microscope is the only way to verify the presence of asbestos.

Note: If in doubt, treat suspect material as though it does contain asbestos.

POLICY

1. Demolition License for Removal of Asbestos Cement Products

All work to remove Asbestos Cement Products must comply with the requirements of the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* and Regulations and the safety procedure established the WorkSafe Division of the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection.

Special precautions should be taken when renovating buildings containing asbestos cement products, to prevent fibres entering the atmosphere. As far as practicable, asbestos cement material must not be broken, abraded or otherwise disturbed.

Every reasonable measure must be taken to ensure asbestos fibres are not released into the air.

2. Disposal of Asbestos Cement Products to Landfill

Asbestos disposal within the Shire will be undertaken in accordance with the provision of the Department of Environment & Conservation's operation licencing conditions, and the ability to effectively manage the waste and disposal requirements.

Asbestos up to a maximum load of 0.2m³ will be received at the Bridgetown Waste Disposal Site subject to it being wrapped in plastic or packaged and sealed to prevent asbestos fibres entering the atmosphere. Any material not wrapped to the satisfaction of the site attendant will not be permitted to be unloaded from the vehicle. Asbestos received at the Bridgetown Waste Disposal Site will be stored on a pallet(s) until such time it is transferred to the Manjimup Waste Disposal Site for burying. Asbestos greater in size than 0.2m³ will not be accepted and persons will have to make arrangements to transport that product to the Manjimup Waste Disposal Site.

1. As a condition of the 'Demolition Licence' a person engaged in the removal of asbestos cement product will be instructed in the safe handling and transportation procedure.
2. Person or persons wishing to dispose of Asbestos Cement Product generated within the Shire are required to notify the appropriate Shire (Bridgetown-Greenbushes if size is less than 0.2m³ or Shire of Manjimup if greater than 0.2m³ load prior to delivery to or disposal at the waste disposal site.

3. Refuse site attendants will check if asbestos cement product has been wrapped in plastic or packaged and sealed to prevent asbestos fibres entering the atmosphere, prior to it being accepted.
4. Fees for the handling of AC products to be in accordance with Council's Annual Schedule of Fees & Charges.

NOTE PENALTIES:

A person who commits an offence under these regulations is liable to penalties under the Act.