

Asbestos Management

COUNCIL POLICY NO. 138

1. POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect the health of employees, contractors, volunteers, visitors, and members of the community by eliminating and managing exposure to asbestos in and around Gannawarra Shire Council buildings, sites and workplaces.

2. SCOPE

The policy applies to all workplaces, buildings and sites where employees, volunteers and contractors are working on behalf of Council and public access areas under the control of Council.

3. DEFINITIONS

For definitions please refer to Appendix One of this document. For any further definitions please refer to Appendix B in the Managing Asbestos in Workplaces WorkSafe Compliance Code), and Removing Asbestos in Workplaces WorkSafe Compliance Code

4. POLICY

4.1 Operating Principles

As far as practicable, people are not to be exposed to asbestos fibres.

Asbestos Management

There must be an Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) for sites under the management of Council. The plan must include an asbestos audit, prepared by an Occupational Hygienist or other competent person as defined in the WorkSafe compliance codes.

The audit must not be greater than 5-years-old if work is to be undertaken.

The audit must be a Division 6 audit if demolition is to occur.

Details of Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) identified by an Asbestos Audit must be maintained in the AMP and Asbestos Register for the site.

The Asbestos Register location will be clearly conveyed to the site occupant and users.

ACM which is considered accessible will be labelled.

The AMP will be regularly reviewed by Council's Projects and Property department staff. ACM will be managed, based on the assessment and prioritisation of risk – i.e. on the basis of likelihood of exposure.

Contractors and Workers:

- Contractors must adhere to their contract or project instructions. This may include important information about Asbestos Management and ACM
- Contractors must complete Council and site inductions before commencing work
- It is the responsibility of any person undertaking work to check if there is an Asbestos Register or an Asbestos Audit Report available for the site
- An Asbestos Register is not required for a domestic property. An Asbestos Audit will be required at the clients cost if suspected ACM prevents work being safely performed.

Emergency Situations

- Following a fire, flood or other emergency on Council property, the Manager Projects and Property should verify if there has been an Asbestos Audit on the property and advise on appropriate action, prior to making safe – these audit results are to be provided to whoever is making the site safe as soon as possible.
- If no Asbestos Audit exists and it is likely there will be asbestos, the site should be barricaded and an Asbestos Audit arranged prior to removal of any material from the site.
- If any suspected ACM poses a risk of causing further exposure to others or is in an unsafe condition, this is to be treated as ACM and removed following the criteria for Asbestos Removal and Minor Removal below.
- Where ACM is not fixed or installed (e.g. dumped material on public land) removal will be the responsibility of the unit in charge of the area or site and a licenced removalist will be arranged if it is greater than the amount classified under Minor Removal Criteria below. Appropriate controls will be documented on the SWMS or JSA prior to commencing removal.

Risk Assessments

- For work at a client's domestic residence, a risk assessment is to be undertaken and any material which is suspected ACM is to be treated as ACM.
- Where there is a possibility that ACM is present and may be exposed (eg mowing, trimming, cleaning or digging adjacent to asbestos containing walls) this needs to be considered in the risk assessment prior to undertaking works adjacent to any structure. This is to be documented on the SWMS or JSA prior to commencing work.
- A SWMS is required prior to removal of ACM.

Asbestos Removal

- ACM which is disturbed, accessible or in poor condition and has the potential to cause harm will be removed where possible or arrangements made to make it safe
- Friable ACM will be prioritised for removal
- ACM which is in good condition and fully contained will not be removed unless it poses a risk (e.g. location, building use, fire risk)
- Removal of ACM from a client's residence is the responsibility of the client
- Materials which are ACM (e.g. pipes) may only be removed by Council employees if this meets the Minor Removal Criteria (see below)
- A clearance certificate is required post asbestos removal by a licenced removalist before any other work in the area can commence
- Air monitoring is recommended for all licenced removalist work – it is mandatory for Class A removal. This monitoring should be done by an independent (from the removalist) and suitably qualified person. Results of air monitoring are to be supplied to the Supervisor at a frequency which ensures any people near or on the site will not be exposed to asbestos fibres
- Where a major clean-up of asbestos dust is required, and will involve more than 10 minutes work, a Class A removalist is required.

Minor Removal Criteria (10m² or less)

- Unlicensed person/s who have been trained in asbestos awareness may remove ACM only if it meets the minor removal criteria:
 - Non-friable ACM (or suspected non-friable ACM)
 - Less than 10m² in surface area
 - The person removing it will do so for not more than one hour in a 7 day period
 - Will be transported in accordance with EPA requirements
 - Process for removal meets the requirements of Removing Asbestos in Workplaces Compliance Code
 - A documented SWMS, JSA or Asbestos Risk Control Plan will be followed
 - A record of removal is to be maintained and documented onto an incident report detailing the precautions taken to minimise exposure (including process to minimise fibres and details of the PPE used) and the names of the people who did the removal to ensure the potential exposure is monitored.
- All other asbestos removal shall be done by a licensed removalist following an Asbestos Control Plan. The WorkSafe Compliance Code for Removing Asbestos in Workplaces includes a Pro forma Control Plan.

Disposal and transportation

- All asbestos waste is to be disposed of in an approved waste disposal site licensed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- PPE such as plastic, overalls, gloves and masks must be available
- All ACM, PPE and other contaminated waste is to be double wrapped in plastic and clearly labelled with an appropriate warning sign indicating asbestos waste
- Householder delivery of domestically sourced asbestos is not accepted at the Gannawarra Central Landfill.
- Commercial contractors (eg licensed asbestos removalists) bringing ACM to the Gannawarra Central Landfill must hold an EPA waste transport permit. The waste producer must provide a waste transport certificate. The waste transporter and the waste receiver must complete the appropriate sections of the certificate. Disposal at the landfill will be conducted under the direction of the landfill operator or Council employee.

Action in the event of exposure

- Exposure is to be documented on an incident notification form
- If exposed to asbestos fibres, inform your manager and seek advice on the health effect from a health professional particularly if the person is exhibiting:
 - Shortness of breath, wheezing, or hoarseness
 - A persistent cough that gets worse over time
 - Blood in the sputum (fluid) coughed up from the lungs
 - Pain or tightening in the chest or difficulty swallowing
 - Swelling of the neck or face
 - Loss of appetite or weight loss
 - Fatigue or anaemia.

4.2 Responsibilities

Managers

- Managers are responsible for the implementation of this policy and ensuring employees, contractors, volunteers, visitors and members of the community comply as appropriate.
- In the event of a breach of this policy, the manager will follow Council's grievance and discipline procedures.
- Any asbestos discovered on a site which is under the management of a unit is the responsibility of that unit.
- ACM in Council owned or managed sites is the responsibility of the Manager Projects and Property. Any asbestos on these properties is to be managed by the Projects and Property department.
- Other sites may include a park managed by Parks and Gardens, a road site managed by Works or a client's home managed by Community Care. The responsibility and management of these sites may be transferred to other units if agreed.

Supervisor of the work

- Will ensure amendments to the Asbestos Audit is forwarded to the Manager Projects and Property so the Asbestos Register can be amended to reflect any ACM discovered and or removed
- Will ensure a risk assessment (or SWMS or JSA) is completed
- Will report any exposure to fibres, dust or ACM on an incident report form
- Will ensure contact of less than 1 hour in a 7 day period is monitored for any person involved in minor removal of ACM
- When ACM is removed by a licenced removalist, the supervisor will ensure work does not recommence until a Clearance Certificate is obtained.

Employees and Contractors

- Are responsible for encouraging employees, contractors, volunteers, visitors and members of the community to comply with this policy as appropriate.
- Have the authority to manage asbestos in a manner which ensures their health is not affected, and the health of other persons is not affected by their activities.

4.3 Training

- To aid in identification of suspected asbestos, appropriate training will be arranged in "Asbestos Awareness" for relevant employees. All persons carrying out minor ACM removal must undertake this training.
- Members of the community requesting advice on the safe removal and disposal of asbestos are to be advised:
 - Removal by professional removalists is recommended
 - Information can be found on the internet at www.asbestos.vic.gov.au.

4.4 Notification

Asbestos removal licence holders must notify WorkSafe before performing asbestos removal work:

- At least 24 hours before commencing asbestos removal work if the total area to be removed is 10 square metres or less of non-friable asbestos-containing material.
- Within 24 hours of commencing the asbestos removal work if the asbestos removal work is undertaken as the result of an unexpected situation (as per regulation 299 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017).
- At least 5 days before the asbestos removal work commences in all other cases (including where asbestos removal work involves friable asbestos or non-friable asbestos greater than 10 square metres).

If site preservation is requested by WorkSafe, the Supervisor must make the site safe and no work can commence until WorkSafe advises it is appropriate to do so.

4.5 Administrative Updates

- It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this, such a change may be made administratively.
- Examples include a change to the name of a Council unit, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact.
- Any change or update which materially alters this document must be made with the approval of key stakeholders.

5. POLICY REVIEW

Council will review the Asbestos Management policy as required but always within two years after a general election of the Council.

At the time of review, this policy was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna offices or online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer on (03) 5450 9333.

Altus ECM Reference: 3.000518

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Reviewed:

20/07/2022

To be reviewed

2026

Appendix One – Definitions

ACM – Asbestos Containing Material.

Asbestos contaminated dust - is dust that has settled within the workplace and is, or is assumed to be, contaminated with asbestos. Asbestos contaminated dust is not captured under the definition of friable asbestos and is therefore considered separately. However, because there is a potential risk to health from exposure to airborne asbestos fibres from asbestos-contaminated dust, its removal is regulated under the Dangerous Goods Order.

PPE – Personal Protective Equipment – details of the equipment to be worn to prevent exposure to ACM is described in the Removing Asbestos in Workplaces Compliance Code (Edition No. 1, Sept 2008).

Employee – includes paid employee, volunteer or contractor undertaking work for or behalf of Council.

Supervisor – person who has control of the management of people and activities responsible for the work. Examples include the Project Manager, Supervisor or the Manager.

Client – stakeholder for the property or asset, including owner of the service or property.

Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) or Job Safety Analysis (JSA) - a risk assessment which describes the hazards and risks to health or safety of that work; and sufficiently describes measures to control those risks; and the manner in which the risk control measures are to be implemented.

Asbestos Control Plan (ACP) – identifies the specific control measures a licence holder will use to ensure employees and other people are not at risk when removal work is being conducted. It is similar to a job safety analysis (JSA) but is focused on the specific control measures necessary to reduce risk from exposure to asbestos. For more details refer to Removal of Asbestos Compliance Code. The ACP must be provided to the supervisor prior to commencing work and should be displayed on site while the removal is being undertaken.

Incident reporting – where there is any unplanned exposure to ACM or suspected ACM this should be notified using an incident form.

Friable – When dry: (a) may be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to powder by hand pressure, or (b) as a result of a work process becomes such that it may be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to powder by hand pressure.

APPENDIX TWO – WHO CAN PERFORM REMOVAL WORK

Note: This does not apply where the asbestos to be collected/removed is asbestos contaminated dust (See Appendix 1 for definition).

