



Asbestos management

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The objective of this document is to:

- provide an overview of the Department's asbestos management process
- outline the roles and responsibilities of schools, the Department and other key stakeholders in managing asbestos in schools
- improve understanding and awareness of the Department's asbestos management process.

Relevant legislation and regulation:

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007](#)

This policy aligns with the following school asset lifecycle stage



Rationale

The Department of Education and Training and all Victorian government schools are subject to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*. These outline the responsibilities of employers and building occupiers in relation to the control and management of asbestos hazards.

Asbestos is a natural mineral that was used extensively in building and consumer products until the mid to late 1980s, when it was phased out and banned due to its associated health risks. This historical use means asbestos is still found in schools, buildings and sometimes in the soil of school sites.

While the asbestos found in school buildings is considered low risk, the inhalation of damaged asbestos fibres can pose serious health problems.

In the majority of cases, it is safer to leave asbestos containing materials (ACMs) fixed or installed and periodically review their condition over time. However, if an ACM has deteriorated, been disturbed or dust is present, the likelihood that asbestos fibres will be released into the air is increased.

Policy statement

The Department is committed to providing safe and operational school environments for all staff and students. This is best achieved by enabling and

supporting school asset managers to manage their assets at a local level.

A vital part of providing safe and operational school environments is the effective management of ACM in Victoria's school buildings.

To ensure the effective management of ACM, all Asbestos Workplace Managers and contractors dealing with ACM in schools are accountable for adhering to the legal responsibilities, procedures and protocols detailed in the Department's [Asbestos Management Plan](#).

Key information

The Department's Asbestos Management Plan (the Plan) includes three sections:

- day to day management
- planned works
- incident response.

It is the responsibility of each school site's designated Asbestos Workplace Manager, with the support of the Department, to ensure all three sections of the Plan are adhered to.

A school's designated Asbestos Workplace Manager may be:

- the principal
- a staff delegate of the principal.

Although another individual can undertake the role of Asbestos Workplace Manager, Principals are ultimately

responsible for ensuring the safety of students, staff, contractors and visitors.

Asbestos Management Plans

Day-to-day management

The day-to-day management of asbestos is the most important section of the Plan. Day-to-day management of asbestos includes both asbestos hazard identification and regular monitoring of a schools asbestos profile.

Assisted by department led training, a designated asbestos workplace manager is required to manage their schools asbestos register and undertake quarterly monitoring.

Planned works

The planned works section of the Plan details the correct management of proposed works in or around school buildings.

The term 'works' includes everything from a working bee to large scale capital works.

Whenever proposed works are planned at a school, a Division 6 Hazardous Building Materials Audit must be undertaken and when appropriate correct asbestos removal procedures must be followed by qualified contractors.

Incident response

In the event that disturbed or damaged asbestos is discovered, the incident response section of the Plan details the process to be followed to ensure the immediate safety of the school site, and where appropriate, the correct asbestos removal procedures.

If ACM is found or disturbed on site, the Department's Asbestos Customer Call Centre must be contacted on **1300 133 468**.

Related documents

- [Asbestos Management Plan](#) – a document used by every school to safely manage the presence of asbestos
- [Occupational Health and Safety Management System](#) – focuses on improving workplace safety. Asbestos is found under the Hazard Management section.

Contacts

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Key words

Asbestos, Asbestos Management Plan, hazard, workplace asbestos manager, audit, OHS.

