

20 POINT SAFETY CHECK FOR CONTRACTORS, SUBCONTRACTORS AND WORKERS

For buildings known to be constructed prior to December 31 2003, workers, subcontractors and maintenance personal must always assume the presence of asbestos or ACM until proven otherwise.

1. Where possible confirm the age of the building.
2. Seek the building asbestos register and management plan from building management. If an asbestos register is not available DO NOT COMMENCE WORK. An inspection and report by a licensed asbestos assessor, occupational hygienist or competent person must be commissioned for the areas of work prior to commencing work.
3. When reviewing the register, consider it as a guide to the presence of asbestos rather than an absolute record. Always assume that ACM may be obscured by other materials unless testing has been conducted to confirm that asbestos is not present
4. Where ACM is confirmed as being present in the building, this should be considered a “red flag” to the possibility of unknown ACM’s being present.
5. If the areas you are working in have not been identified as containing ACM, look at other similar locations within the Asbestos register. If ACM has been identified in similar locations elsewhere in the building then you must assume the presence of ACM in your work area.
6. **Asbestos registers are often not all encompassing of every building element due to inaccessibility. If materials in your area of work do not feature in the register as being inspected, then they must be treated as if asbestos is present.**
7. Where materials that cannot or have not been verified as free from asbestos a licensed asbestos assessor, occupational hygienist or competent person must be engaged to inspect the area prior to commencing work that may disturb the material.
8. All concealed materials or closed spaces in buildings constructed prior to December 31 2003, must be treated as containing asbestos if these spaces don’t feature in the asbestos register confirming that they don’t contain asbestos.

NOTE: All of these examples may be on site and are often concealed:

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| • Ceiling spaces | • Fire door frames | • Service tunnels | • Pipe lagging |
| • Bulkheads | • Fire doors | • Service channels | • Gaskets – Fire services pumps |
| • Service Risers | • Sacrificial form work | • Building roof spaces | • Gaskets – Mechanical services |
| • Electrical switchboards / cupboards | • Fire rating compounds | • Concealed floor finishes i.e. below floor finishes | • Gaskets – Heater systems |
| • Mechanical services duct | • Waterproofing membranes | • Concealed wall linings i.e. behind wall linings. | • Brick mortar |
| • Mechanical services heater banks | • Fresh air ducts | | |
| | • Exhaust ducts | | |

9. Never discount that building works by others may have already unknowingly disturbed asbestos – if you come across suspect loose material or debris in a building known to contain asbestos – STOP and notify the building manager or engage a hygienist to take samples for testing.
10. Never cut or drill into any material before confirming it is NOT an ACM.
11. Always check below existing floor finishes for older floor finishes or adhesives that may contain ACM – there may be several layers.
12. Always check behind wall and ceiling linings as they may be concealing older asbestos linings behind.
13. Never cut or drill a fire door or frame – these must be tested by a hygienist under controlled conditions. NB – Treat all doors and frames as possibly containing ACM until proven otherwise.
14. Where asbestos removal is required, it must be done under controlled circumstances by a licensed contractor.
15. Don’t attempt to remove or work with ACM unless you are licensed to do so or you have received the required training with respect to current legislation and Codes of Practice. An Asbestos Removal Control Plan will be required for any removal works. The regulator must be notified prior to removal works.
16. When working near ACM your SWMS must include the hazard and appropriate controls.
17. All workers must be trained in the SWMS.
18. All workers must be provided and use appropriate PPE and RPE.
19. Always report any unexpected finds of asbestos to your supervisor or the site manager and NEVER enter an area that is signed “Danger – Asbestos” unless authorised and implementing the appropriate SWMMS and using PPE and RPE.
20. **IF IN DOUBT, STOP – ITS NOT WORTH EXPOSING YOURSELF, YOUR WORKMATES OR OTHERS TO ASBESTOS.**

