



Asbestos Awareness Toolbox Talk – Exploding Asbestos Myths

Project Name: _____

Date: _____

Company Name: _____

Presenter: _____

Subject: Exploding the myths of working with asbestos

Duration: _____

What is the aim of this Toolbox Talk?

To ensure workers fulfil their responsibilities to manage asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) safely.

What are the myths surrounding working with asbestos?

- ⊙ Some older tradies and workers who've worked with ACMs in the past persist in ignoring the warnings and continue to take risks when working with asbestos.
- ⊙ It's **NOT** okay to take risks when working with asbestos!
- ⊙ It's **NOT** okay for workers or home owners to disturb, cut or drill small amounts of asbestos!

Why is it important to manage asbestos safely and in accordance with regulations?

- ⊙ Tradies and workers can expect to encounter ACMs in their daily work.
- ⊙ If workers don't know how to manage asbestos safely, they risk inhaling asbestos fibres and/or exposing others if ACMs are disturbed.
- ⊙ If fibres are inhaled, this could lead to asbestos-related diseases.

There are two types of ACMs that were common in construction: “non-friable” and “friable”.

1. **NON-FRIABLE ASBESTOS (also known as ‘bonded’ ACMs)** is material containing asbestos that is not friable asbestos including materials containing asbestos fibres reinforced with a bonding compound. It cannot be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to a powder by hand pressure when dry.
NOTE: Non-friable ACMs CAN BECOME FRIABLE if damaged, unsealed and exposed to weather!
2. **FRIABLE ASBESTOS** is any material containing asbestos in the form of a powder or can be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to powder by hand pressure when dry. **FRIABLE ASBESTOS IS EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS** because the fibres are uncontained and can easily become airborne!

Don't put your health at risk! It's okay to say NO!

- ⊙ Every worker has the right to remain safe at work and has the responsibility to respect asbestos and manage it safely!
- ⊙ If asked to perform a task involving ACMs that you believe is unsafe, it's okay to say NO!
- ⊙ Talk to your Site Manager / Supervisor, your boss or your WH&S representative immediately.
- ⊙ If the only person you work with is your boss, talk to them about your concerns.
- ⊙ If your boss or others won't listen or you feel you can't talk to them, remember, you have a responsibility to yourself and your family to stay safe!
- ⊙ If no one will listen you can report unsafe practices to the regulator in your state or territory.

Are the laws about asbestos management and removal enforced?

YES! Legislation and guidance materials aimed at minimising exposure to asbestos fibres include:

- ⊙ The Work Health & Safety Act & the Work Health and Safety Regulations
- ⊙ Asbestos Codes of Practice (can vary in each state and territory so check with the regulator)

When it comes to asbestos, the rule is:

If you think a material may contain asbestos, assume it is asbestos and take appropriate precautions!

For Fact Sheets, information & ACM images visit asbestosawareness.com.au – it's not worth the risk!

