

Asbestos Safety Procedures

1. Preamble

- 1.1 Asbestos fibres have been linked to the development of lung disease such as asbestosis, mesothelioma and other cancers. In NSW restrictions have been placed on asbestos usage through the *NSW Occupational Health & Safety Act 2000*, the Asbestos Dust Regulation and other associated legislation. The University of Western Sydney will where possible eliminate the use of asbestos materials in processes and projects carried out by the University.
- 1.2 Wherever possible traditional asbestos uses will be substituted by safer, non-asbestos materials. In the absence of substitute materials, special precautions, as required under the Worksafe Code of Practice on the Handling and Removal of Asbestos Products, will be adhered to. Handling of all products containing asbestos will be in accordance with the Worksafe Code of Practice and the requirements of regulations under the *NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*.

2. Aim

- 2.1 UWS recognizes its legal obligation under the OHS Act to provide a safe working environment. The University is committed to achieving the highest standards of occupational safety, health and hygiene in accordance with best practice.
- 2.2 The principles that underpin the University's procedures on the management of asbestos materials are:
 - (i) Identification of asbestos materials in and about the property under the control of UWS
 - (ii) Evaluation of all identified asbestos materials by competent and experienced persons
 - (iii) Control of all identified asbestos materials
 - (iv) Implementation of safe work practices whenever they may be a risk of exposure to asbestos dust and air borne fibres.

3. Responsibility

3.1 Capital Works & Facilities

- (i) Develop, implement and monitor the introduction of an Asbestos Management Plan and Procedures for the University of Western Sydney.
- (ii) Asbestos or material that is suspected to contain asbestos produces, is promptly reported to Capital Works and Facilities.
- (iii) Prior to the commencement of any building works that may disturb asbestos material or give rise to the emissions of asbestos fibres conduct a risk assessment and implement control measures which are commensurate with the levels of risk identified.
- (iv) Consult with relevant staff as part of any risk assessment and the implementation of control measures.
- (v) Identify asbestos materials in and about any property under the control of the university and maintain an Asbestos Register in accordance with the OHS Regulations, 2001
- (vi) Ensure that asbestos related work is carried out in accordance with Worksafe Code of Practice and guidelines by appropriately licenced and competent persons/contractors.

3.2 OH&S Co-ordinator:

- (i) Provide the ongoing technical expertise, advice and assistance to staff who are conducting risk assessments in the workplace.

3.3 Managers, Supervisors and Staff

- (i) Who have concerns in relation to asbestos related materials in the workplace should seek advice and direction from Capital Works & Facilities on appropriate hazard strategy methods.

4. Procedures

4.1 Register: A register will be kept of all known locations of asbestos throughout University buildings and these locations will be closely monitored and maintained by the Capital Works & Facilities. (See Page 65 of the OHS Regulations 2001.)

- (i) Fire blankets of asbestos content are to be properly disposed of and replaced with glass fibre products.
- (ii) Items containing asbestos, such as gloves, mitts, mats and insulating materials for use in hot work are to be replaced with ceramic fibre products.

4.2 Guidelines for Disposal of Asbestos: All asbestos and asbestos related materials will be disposed of in accordance with Worksafe Code of Practice under the guidance of Capital Works & Facilities.

4.3 Building Fabric: Asbestos elements of building fabric (for buildings owned by the University) are the responsibility of the Capital Works & Facilities.

4.4 Items/Appliances with Asbestos Content: Items such as some ovens which contain asbestos are to be disposed of as asbestos waste (separation of the asbestos from the oven is prohibitively expensive). These items are owned by particular departments and their safe disposal is the responsibility of the department concerned. Capital Works & Facilities may be contacted for the names of appropriate licenced asbestos removalists.

5. Further Information

5.1 If you are concerned about a possible asbestos hazard in the University, contact Capital Works & Facilities or the OHS & R Unit.

- (i) *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*
http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/html/reg_31aug2001.asp
- (ii) *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*
http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/pdf/occ_health&safety.pdf
- (iii) *Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos* [NOHSC: 2002 (1998)]
- (iv) *Guide to the Control of Asbestos Hazards in Buildings and Structures* [NOHSC: 3002 (1998)] <http://www.nohsc.gov.au>
- (v) The Code of Practice and Guide referred to above are known collectively as the Worksafe Code of Practice and Guidance Notes on Asbestos. They are specifically referenced in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 (hereafter referred to as the Regulation) under Clause 259.
- (vi) Under the Regulation, the Worksafe Code of Practice and Guidance Notes on Asbestos are the *minimum* standards for asbestos removal work