



Asbestos Works Procedure

1. Purpose

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) is committed to providing and maintaining a safe work environment. WACHS is considered a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) and, therefore, has obligations under the [Work, Health and Safety Act 2020](#) and [Work, Health and Safety Regulations 2022](#) to manage risks to health and safety so far as reasonably practicable.

This is a safe work procedure that supports the [Occupational Safety and Health Policy](#) and demonstrates the operational requirements and safe working practices adopted by WACHS when working with asbestos or Asbestos Containing Material (ACM). This procedure applies to all workers (e.g. employees, contractors, volunteers) and it should be read as an extension of the [WACHS-wide Asbestos Management Plan](#) (AMP) and any site specific AMP.

2. Procedure

This procedure ensures that the following requirements are met in relation to asbestos:

- asbestos identification and recording
- safe work procedures and risk control measures for asbestos or ACM removal and maintenance activities
- emergency procedure and health monitoring
- relevant stakeholders receive information about the works (risk assessment, impact, status update)
- workers have received the appropriate training
- appropriate decontamination and waste management process have been followed
- roles and responsibilities

2.1 Procedure Requirements

The role of WACHS is to ensure the proper management of potential health risks from exposure to asbestos.

A WACHS workplace is assumed to have asbestos or ACM if there is uncertainty as to whether asbestos is present in any part of a structure or plant. The Regional Manager Infrastructure and Support Services or Nominated Delegate/Site Supervisor deemed to have asbestos management or control responsibility of the workplace can either assume asbestos is present and treat it with appropriate caution based on the level of risk or have a sample analysed. Once the presence and location of asbestos has been assumed all requirements for managing asbestos must be followed until the material is removed or testing has confirmed that it is not or does not contain asbestos.

Consideration of risk from disturbance asbestos or ACM products shall occur as part of routine planning of Infrastructure and asset management projects, with particular attention to the planning process prior to demolition, building renovation or ground disturbance works as described in the [Code of Practice: How to Safely Remove Asbestos](#) and [Code of Practice: How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace](#).

2.2 Assessing the Risk of Exposure

Any work that has potential to disturb asbestos or an ACM is deemed high risk work and will require a risk assessment in consultation with workers. Asbestos risk assessments are done by following the [Job Hazard Analysis Procedure](#) (JHA) or [Safe Work Method Statement Procedure](#) (SWMS) for routine, high risk work and completing the relevant [JHA Form](#) or [SWMS Form](#).

The primary objective of asbestos risk control is to prevent the inhalation of asbestos fibres. This will be achieved by:

- identifying all known or suspected asbestos or ACM on the WACHS asbestos register and with site signs and labels
- the asbestos register is consulted when planning all non-routine work
- avoiding disturbance of low-risk ACM with regular review of its condition
- providing asbestos awareness training
- providing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for work where exposure risk cannot be adequately controlled by the above measures
- the removal whenever reasonably practicable of asbestos or ACM under strictly controlled conditions by trained, competent and licensed personnel.

The type of material that binds asbestos fibres will influence the potential for airborne asbestos to be released into the air from different asbestos or ACM.

2.3 Asbestos Types

ACMs fall into two broad categories, friable and non-friable (also known as bonded).

'Friable' asbestos refers to asbestos-containing materials that are in the form of powder, or can be crumbled, pulverised, or reduced to powder by hand pressure when dry. Friable asbestos materials can contain high percentages of asbestos fibres and are more likely to release these fibres into the airborne environment when disturbed. Therefore, they pose a greater risk to health.

'Non-friable', or bonded asbestos is used to refer to ACM in which the asbestos is firmly bound in the matrix of the material. They are made up of asbestos fibres together with a bonding compound (such as cement). These materials are unlikely to release measurable levels of asbestos fibre into the airborne environment if they are left undisturbed, therefore, they pose a lower risk to health. However, 'non-friable' asbestos may become 'friable' through ageing/degradation and/or disruption and release of fibres through inappropriate works (such as drilling or sawing) increasing the risk level.

For a comprehensive list of examples of asbestos containing materials refer [Code of Practice: How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace](#).

2.4 Asbestos Identification and Recording (Asbestos Register)

Non-friable ACMs are the most common in WACHS facilities. They are commonly called 'fibro', 'asbestos cement' and 'AC sheeting' and, if in good condition and left undisturbed, will not create a risk to the health and safety of individuals. However, since asbestos may not be readily identifiable, it cannot be assumed that asbestos is not present in-built infrastructure or as part of outdoor areas. The confirmation of asbestos content can be arranged through the Site Supervisor by organising sampling via a competent person and

testing by a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratory, for provision of an asbestos analysis report.

The WACHS Online Asbestos Register should be updated by Site Supervisor or nominated delegate as soon as asbestos or ACM has been identified or there has been a change. A site-specific, printed copy is to be made available at all sites, overseen by the Site Supervisor who ensures all workers are aware of the asbestos or ACM before conducting work on site.

Asbestos inspections should be done as necessary or in the following circumstances:

- when asbestos is assumed in potential high risk/exposure locations
- when known asbestos has been disturbed
- once a year for asbestos areas assessed as high risk and once every three years for asbestos areas assessed as low risk
- when a competent person has advised to be done withing a specific timeframe.

The WACHS [Online Asbestos Register](#) information can be accessed by the by Site Supervisor or nominated delegate for managing asbestos information. System access and training is available on request to the WACHS Infrastructure Reporting and Systems team WACHSInfrastructureReportingandSystems@health.wa.gov.au.

2.5 Signs and Labels

Any asbestos identified should be labelled where practical in accordance with the [Work, Health and Safety Regulations 2022](#) and [Code of Practice: How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace](#), to ensure that it is easily identifiable.

Where asbestos work is being conducted a work site should be clearly defined to warn people that and to limit entry to essential people only. Signs and barriers must delineate the boundaries of the “Asbestos Work Area” and the “Asbestos Removal Site”. The boundaries of these areas should be determined by a competent person based on a risk assessment. The use of effective signs and barriers to isolate the work area should prevent those not involved with the work from being exposed to any potential risk. All signage and warning signs should comply with AS 1319–1994: Safety signs for the occupational environment.

2.6 Asbestos Management Plan

A [WACHS-wide Asbestos Management Plan](#) (AMP) has been developed to encompass all assets including Hospital and Health Centres, Specialty Centres, Clinic and Surgery Centres, Housing/Staff Quarters and Office Accommodation. However, depending on the level of risk and scope of works a site-specific AMP may be developed on a case by case basis.

WACHS will ensure the WACHS-wide AMP and any site-specific AMP information are readily accessible to workers, health and safety representatives and a PCBU. Once the AMP is reviewed and updated, an annual statement of compliance is acknowledged and signed by both the WACHS responsible officers and Executive Directors.

2.7 General Building Works

All workers performing general building maintenance and repairs, installations or working with, or removing asbestos or ACM in department workplaces must ensure that:

- The site asbestos register is examined before the commencement of works.
- The asbestos identification and recording and safe asbestos and ACM removal process is followed where asbestos has been identified as part of general building/maintenance works.
- All risks relating to the possible exposure to airborne asbestos fibres are identified, assessed and evaluated before any contract works are undertaken.
- All asbestos removal is undertaken in accordance with the [Work, Health and Safety Regulations 2022](#) with oversight through the Site Supervisor who will ensure the worker is appropriately qualified and experienced.
- Asbestos works are conducted using appropriate health and safety safeguards, including incorporating appropriate signage.
- Safe work zones are established where asbestos repair or removal work is to be undertaken. All site personnel have been vacated from area before the commencement of removal works.
- The Site Supervisor shall consider the need for notifying immediate neighbours and businesses of the works involving asbestos or ACM.
- The Site Supervisor is advised if asbestos is identified as part of building maintenance and/or repair work that is not included in the site asbestos register.
- The Site Supervisor or nominated delegate updates the WACHS Online Asbestos Register as soon as additional asbestos or ACM has been identified or there has been a change.
- Air monitoring is undertaken by a competent person or an independent SafeWork WA licensed asbestos assessor which are analysed by a NATA accredited laboratory and reports provided to the delegated Site Supervisor when required.

The [Asbestos safety for trades and construction workers: Pamphlet](#), developed by Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DIMRS), for trades and construction workers outlines ways to safely work with asbestos.

2.8 Demolition and refurbishment at residential premises

When a contractor has been engaged to conduct demolition or refurbishment at a residential premise, it becomes the workplace of that contractor. Consequently, that contractor must identify and remove asbestos or ACM if it is likely to be disturbed by the demolition or refurbishment before the work commences.

All staff housed in WACHS owned or leased accommodation with known or suspected ACM are to be provided with [WACHS Asbestos Notice to Tenants Letter](#) awareness information relating to asbestos.

2.9 Asbestos and ACM Removal

Asbestos removal work must be carried out by a competent person who has been suitably trained or licensed, depending on the type and quantity of ACM. The table below outlines the asbestos removal requirements.

	Friable Asbestos	Non-friable Asbestos
Licence	Class A (unrestricted)	Class B (restricted)
Notification	5 days prior	5 days prior
Visual clearance	Licensed Asbestos Assessor (LAA)	Independent competent person (ICP)
Air Monitoring	By the LAA	If ICP believed risk
Clearance Certificate	Yes	Yes

For safe removal of asbestos and ACM refer to the [Code of Practice: How to safely remove asbestos](#).

2.10 Emergency Procedure

In the event of an emergency on site or facility that contain asbestos, workers are required to Stop work immediately, warn anyone nearby and follow the [Asbestos Emergency Management Flowchart](#) which outlines the flow of works and required precautions.

Specific guidance is available for responding to [fires, storm damage and natural disasters](#) and single incidents involving [high pressure water equipment on roofs](#).

2.11 Health Monitoring

Health monitoring in the workplace refers to the health monitoring of employees where there is a risk to health from exposure to certain hazardous substances (e.g. lead, asbestos, silica, isocyanate) health monitoring must be supervised by an appointed Medical Practitioner.

If health surveillance is required, monitoring and reporting will be coordinated by the Regional Manager Infrastructure and Support Services by completing a [Safety Risk Report Form](#) and immediately notify the Regional WHS team of the requirements for health monitoring. The WACHS WHS Department will coordinate the referral to an approved provider.

WACHS will ensure that health monitoring of a worker includes the following:

- the worker's demographic, medical and occupational history
- records of the worker's personal exposure
- a physical examination of the worker, unless another type of health monitoring is recommended by a registered medical practitioner.

The worker and WorkSafe must be notified of the results of the health monitoring. The cost associated with health monitoring will be met by WACHS, as relevant to the Employee's contract of employment.

2.12 Communication Plan

WACHS recognises the value of open communication and is committed to ensuring all relevant stakeholders are aware of the status of any controlled or disturbed asbestos management initiatives.

Any important occurrences, inspection results, remediation plans, and any additional precautions to preserve the premises' security will be regularly communicated to all relevant stakeholders by using the appropriate [Controlled Asbestos Communication Letter](#) or [Disturbed Asbestos Communication Letter](#).

2.13 Training

Asbestos awareness training is to be included in local induction and orientation procedures for WACHS workers and external staff such as: volunteers, agency staff, locum, students on placement. The National Strategic Plan Asbestos Awareness Training and WACHS JHA online training (SH04 EL1) are available on the WACHS Learning Management System, MyLearning.

Individual workers who carry out licensed asbestos removal work on behalf of or for the contracted PCBU who holds the licence are not required to hold an asbestos licence but must meet the minimum training requirements listed in 2.9.

Induction briefings for contractors who work at the site are to be conducted during sign in procedures or during their site induction. Where necessary, the briefings will be site specific to the location of works.

2.14 Waste Management

The asbestos removalist needs to ensure that the asbestos waste is contained and labelled in accordance with the [Globally Harmonized System](#) (GHS) before it is removed from the asbestos removal area. In some cases, it may not be reasonably practicable to dispose of PPE. If this is the case, the PPE must be decontaminated prior to it being removed from the asbestos removal area. If the PPE cannot be decontaminated in the asbestos removal area, it must be kept in a sealed and labelled container until it is reused for asbestos removal purposes. Where a sealed container has been used, it must be decontaminated and labelled in accordance with the GHS prior to it being removed from the asbestos removal area to indicate that it contains asbestos.

2.15 Record Keeping

Records will be kept of the following items in accordance with the Asbestos Records Management Procedure:

- a current site asbestos register, within online platform and paper copies at site
- site specific Asbestos Management Plan (if applicable)
- previous versions of the site asbestos register (including reviews)
- inspection details including inspector, risk assessment and any recommended actions
- risk assessments performed for work that may disturb asbestos
- worker asbestos awareness training records
- laboratory analysis results or consultant reports for bulk material or soil samples

The following records must be maintained by the person responsible for managing asbestos removal:

- copy of the approved Asbestos Removal Control Plan and associated risk assessment
- records of asbestos removalist contractor credentials
- clearance certificates following removal
- air monitoring results
- waste disposal and transport records.

The following records must be maintained by WHS:

- results of health surveillance and reasons for initiating health surveillance
- notifications provided to workers and the regulators.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

WACHS, as the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) is responsible for:

- having the appropriate licences for asbestos removal
- advising workers of their obligations and responsibilities under occupational health legislation
- ensure that workers are adequately trained.

WACHS Infrastructure Central Office is responsible for:

- circulating the procedure, and ensure that it is understood and applied
- oversight of the Asbestos Online Register data and provide 6 monthly status reporting to the Department of Health (DoH)
- providing training to regional staff on the use of the [WACHS Online Asbestos Register](#)
- providing ad hoc asbestos status reports.

The **Regional Manager Infrastructure and Support Services** as nominated responsible officer is responsible for:

- management of the Asbestos Online Register data
- conducting workplace inspections to ensure compliance with WACHS Safety requirements are in place
- oversight, management and implementation of this procedure
- operational processes being undertaken and compliant
- arranging asbestos surveys / re-surveys
- conducting workplace inspections to ensure compliance with WACHS Safety requirements are in place
- coordinating the health surveillance process and keep the affected worker informed
- communicate any important occurrences, inspection results, remediation plans, and any additional precautions to preserve the premises' security.

WACHS Site Supervisor (Site Manager/ Regional Manager Infrastructure and Support Services or Nominated Delegate) is responsible for:

- oversight and implementation of this procedure in workplaces under their control
- ensuring risk assessments are being conducted for all work activities before task is being performed
- ensuring that contractors are inducted on the [WACHS Online Induction System](#)
- providing the asbestos register to all workers undertaking work at the site
- updating of the Asbestos Online Register data when change occurs

- actions any repairs and maintenance workers identified through the annual inspection by raising an agility order and identifying it is asbestos related
- liaising where appropriate with workers on a continuous basis so that the existence and condition of asbestos in the working environment is known
- providing training for WACHS workers and ensure contractors are suitably trained
- providing instructions to workers and supervision of health and safety measures
- consulting with workers and their representatives on the control of exposure to airborne asbestos
- providing appropriate PPE to WACHS workers, ensure contractors are wearing suitable PPE and all workers follow the hygiene procedures and use personal decontamination facilities
- ensuring that when relinquishing control of the workplace, the asbestos register is given to the person assuming control.

Work Health and Safety (WHS) Manager is responsible for:

- providing advice to managers and supervisors on JHA requirements in the workplace
- providing advice and consulting with managers and workers on how to manage hazards and risks that have been identified and raised via [Safety Risk Report Form](#) reporting
- conducting workplace inspections to ensure compliance with WACHS Safety requirements are in place
- monitoring and compliance.

Workers are responsible for:

- taking care of their safety and health and that of others and comply with all work procedures and instructions related to asbestos
- co-operating with site supervisors and managers in their fulfilment of legislative obligations
- reporting immediately to the Site Supervisor any perceived safety or health risk
- are suitably trained
- wearing protective clothing and apparatus provided by the manager or supervisor for personal protection and maintain same in good order.

All workers are required to work within policies and guidelines to make sure that WACHS is a safe, equitable and positive place to be.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

4.1 Monitoring

Monitoring of compliance with this document is to be carried out by the WACHS Infrastructure and Environment Directorate through various oversight mechanisms

- performance reporting for executive and regional management oversight of asbestos inspection and risk mitigation.
- periodic review, via the Learning and Development system, to ensure asbestos awareness training is being undertaken as required.
- periodic review, via Online Contractor Induction system, to ensure that contractors have been inducted to WACHS expectation for asbestos.
- site auditing, via regional responsible officer/s, to ensure that asbestos folders are in place where required and contain asbestos information that is up to date and relevant.

4.2 Evaluation

Evaluation of this document will be undertaken collaboratively by the Work Health Safety Directorate and Infrastructure and Environment Directorate utilising the outcomes of periodic review and auditing data as well as stakeholder feedback.

5. Compliance

This procedure is compliant with the [Work Health and Safety \(WHS\) Regulations](#) and [Work Health and Safety Act 2020](#).

Failure to comply with this procedure may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Integrity Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (WA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

6. References

[Code of Practice: How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace](#)

[Code of Practice: How to safely remove asbestos](#)

[AS 1319–1994: Safety signs for the occupational environment](#)

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Accredited Laboratory	A testing laboratory accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) or a similar accreditation authority, or otherwise granted recognition by NATA, either solely or in conjunction with one or more other persons.
Airborne Asbestos Fibres	Fibres of asbestos small enough to be made airborne. For the purposes of monitoring airborne asbestos fibres, only respirable fibres (those fibres less than 3 µm wide, more than 5 µm long and with a length to width ratio of more than 3 to 1) are counted.
Air Monitoring	Means airborne asbestos fibre sampling to assist in assessing exposures and the effectiveness of control measures.
Asbestos	Means the fibrous form of mineral silicates belonging to the serpentine and amphibole groups of rock-forming minerals, including actinolite, amosite (brown asbestos), anthophyllite, chrysotile (white asbestos), crocidolite (blue asbestos), tremolite, or any mixture containing one or more of the mineral silicates belonging to the serpentine and amphibole groups.
Asbestos Management Plan (AMP)	An asbestos management plan sets out where any identified asbestos or asbestos-containing material is present, and how it will be managed.

Asbestos Containing Material (ACM)	Any material containing more than one percent asbestos.
Asbestos Register	WACHS Online Register which captures and reports individual building asbestos register information.
Asbestos Removalist	A competent person who performs asbestos removal work.
Competent Person	A person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience, the knowledge and skills to carry out the task.
Friable (Asbestos)	Means asbestos-containing material, which when dry, is or may become crumbled, pulverised or reduced to powder by hand pressure.
Hazard	A situation or item that has the potential to harm people, property or the environment.
Job Hazard Analysis form (JHA)	A document that outlines work activities to be carried out at a workplace into logical job steps, identification of hazards associated with each step and the controls for those hazards.
National Exposure Standards(NES):	An airborne concentration of a particular substance, within the workers breathing zone, which according to current knowledge, should not cause adverse health effects or undue discomfort to nearly all workers.
Person with Control	A person who has control of premises used as a workplace. The person with control may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the owner or nominated representative of the premises • a person who has, under any contract or lease, an obligation to maintain or repair the premises • a person who is occupying the premises • a person who can make decisions about work undertaken at the premises; or • an employer at the premises.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Equipment and clothing that is used or worn by an individual person to protect themselves against, or minimise their exposure to, workplace risks. It includes items such as face masks and respirators, coveralls, goggles, helmets, gloves and footwear.
Person Conducting Business or Undertaking (PCBU)	PCBU conducts a business or undertaking alone or with others. WACHS is considered a PCBU.
Risk	The likelihood and consequence of injury or harm occurring.
Work	Any activity, physical or mental, carried out in the course of a business, industry, commerce, an occupation or a profession.
Worker	Any person who carries out work for a person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as an employee, contractor or subcontractor (or their employee), self-employed person, outworker, apprentice or trainee, work experience student, employee of a labour hire company placed with a 'host employer' or a volunteer.
Workplace	Means any place where a person works, including residences provided to support works

8. Document Summary

Coverage	WACHS Wide
Audience	All staff
Records Management	Corporate Recordkeeping Compliance Policy
Related Legislation	Environmental Protection Act 1986 Work Health and Safety Act 2020 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022
Related Mandatory Policies / Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk, Compliance and Audit Policy • Clinical Governance, Safety and Quality Framework
Related WACHS Policy Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Safety and Health Policy • Job Hazard Analysis Procedure • Safe Work Method Statement Procedure
Other Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asbestos Emergency Management Flowchart • AS 1319–1994: Safety signs for the occupational environment. • AS 4964:2004 (Method for the qualitative identification of asbestos in bulk samples) • Code of Practice - How to manage work health and safety risks • Code of Practice: How to manage and control asbestos in the workplace • Code of Practice: How to safely remove asbestos • Occupational Health and Safety Code of Practice 2008 • Online Asbestos Register
Related Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Hazard Analysis Form • Safe Work Method Statement Form • Safety Risk Report Form
Related Training Packages	MyLearning - Asbestos National Strategic Plan Awareness Training.
Aboriginal Health Impact Statement Declaration (ISD)	ISD Record ID: 1807
National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards	1.07, 1.10, 1.20, 1.22, 1.25, 1.29, 1.31
Aged Care Quality Agency Accreditation Standards	N/A
National Standards for Mental Health	2.9 Risk Assessment

9. Document Control

Version	Published date	Current from	Summary of changes
1.00	13 October 2023	13 October 2023	New procedure

10. Approval

Policy Owner	Executive Director Infrastructure and Environment
Co-approver	Executive Director People Capability and Culture
Contact	Director Infrastructure
Business Unit	Infrastructure and Environment
EDRMS #	ED-CO-23-332440
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