



Scope

This Operational Protocol must be followed for incidents where there is suspected Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) or Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA).

Guiding Principles

- The Incident Controller shall ensure the structure/s or deposits are assessed to determine if asbestos is present or suspected.
- Whether the presence of an asbestos hazard is confirmed or suspected, RFS members shall ensure that:
 - The area is treated as hazardous.
 - A FRNSW Hazmat response is requested.
 - All non-essential personnel and vehicles are kept away from the hot zone, out of the smoke plume and upwind.
 - Vehicle doors and windows shall remain closed at all times, with air-conditioning on re-circulate.
 - All personnel are made aware of the hazard and, if not wearing self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), wear a P2 or higher level mask in line with Australian/New Zealand Standard 1716:2003: Respiratory Protective Devices.
 - Appropriate firefighting tactics are used.
 - Notifiable Incident Procedures are followed and Health & Safety reporting is commenced.
 - The Decontamination Model is applied and decontamination procedures are commenced as soon as appropriate.

Special Considerations

Hazard Management

- A hazardous materials incident relates to any incident or potential incident involving Dangerous Goods, or other substance which is actually endangering life or may endanger life or property or the environment, or where the use of specialised hazardous material equipment, associated skills, and training is required.
- The incident area shall be marked with RFS barrier tape and the owner/occupier if present, advised of the hazard after operations are concluded.

Minimising Exposure Risk during Firefighting

RFS personnel should use firefighting tactics that aim to keep ACM dust concentrations to a minimum and cause minimal disturbance to ACM:

- the application of a water fog to the disturbed materials will significantly minimise the amount of airborne respirable particulate;
- keep the affected area thoroughly wet with continued application of water;
- avoid the use of high-pressure sprays directly onto suspected ACM; and
- avoid cutting, drilling, or unnecessary movement of any suspected ACM.



Decontamination

RFS members shall not leave the incident without undergoing decontamination. This includes those controlling the decontamination process. Vehicles and equipment shall be subject to decontamination either at the incident (preferred) or on return to the Staging Area or Station.

- A decontamination kit is to be requested from FireCom.
- Establish a decontamination wash down area per the instructions contained in the decontamination kit.
- PPC/PPE (disposable overalls, disposable gloves and P2 or higher level mask) shall be worn at all times.
- All contaminated clothing shall be bagged and sealed before liaising with the RFS District Office who is responsible for laundering of PPC/PPE with designated service providers.
 - Sealed bag(s) shall only be transported outside of the passenger cabin.
 - The laundering of contaminated clothing in homes or Stations is strictly prohibited.
- All waste material shall be bagged, sealed and marked with RFS barrier tape.
 - This shall be left at the site of contamination for disposal by the owner/occupier.
- A [Report of Workplace Injury / Illness / Exposure Form](#) is to be completed for all RFS personnel who attended the incident.

Related Information

Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring silicate mineral with long, thin, fibrous crystals.

Between 1945 and 1980 asbestos was extensively used in the building industry due to its flame-retardant and insulating properties, tensile strength, flexibility and resistance to chemicals. Asbestos fibres were often mixed with cement or woven into fabric or mats and made into construction products such as cement sheeting, insulation, pipes, paint, floor coverings, ceiling tiles and roofing materials.

Asbestos in sheets or pipes is known as “bonded” and when painted or sealed presents little danger to people if untampered with, however asbestos sheeting when burned or impacted with high-pressure water loses its bonded qualities and becomes “friable” and may release particles or fibres into the air.

Some insulation containing asbestos may also be friable and particular caution should be taken when entering roof cavities of older homes.

Friable asbestos is highly toxic. When inhaled it is known to cause fibrous stiffening and shrinking of the lung and mesothelioma (lung cancer). As such asbestos is now a banned product in Australia.

Identifying Asbestos

All structures built before 1987 should be regarded as containing asbestos materials. Consider the age and type of structure when responding to an incident, the construction materials that you can see, ACM signage, and refer to existing site plans / pre-incident plans, and seek information from the owner/occupier.



Definitions

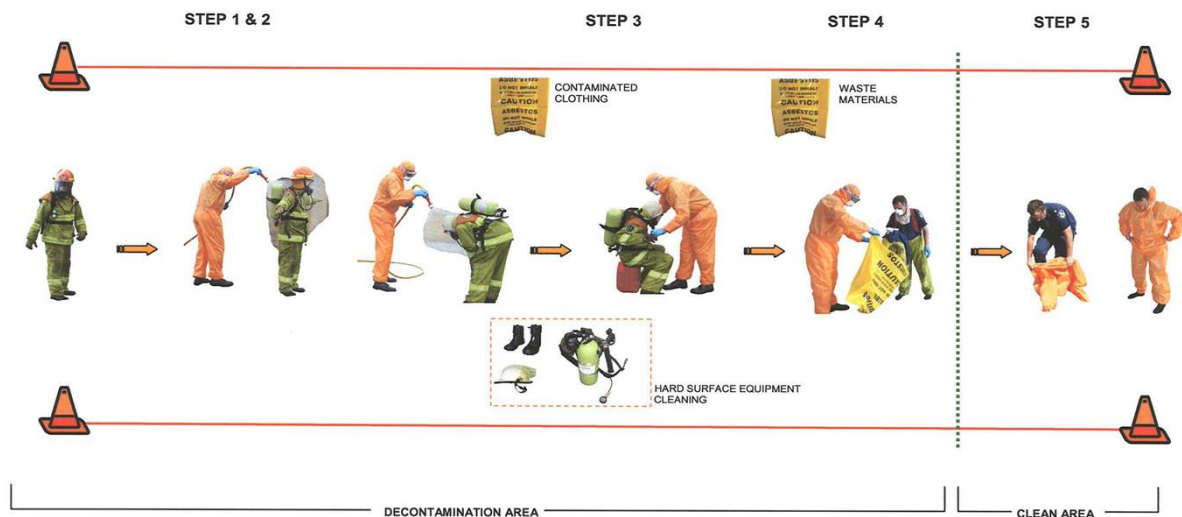
ACM	Asbestos Contaminated Material
Asbestos	A fibrous silicate mineral that is incombustible and is used as cladding or a heat resistant or insulating material.
Asbestos Register	The Asbestos Management Code and the Workplace Health and Safety Regulation require that owners of workplaces keep an accurate register of ACM on the premises. All workplaces built before 1 January 1990 should already have an asbestos register and safety policies and procedures for friable asbestos.
Contaminated	Something harmful or unusable by the addition of hazardous material.
Hazmat	Hazardous Materials - Substances that are capable of causing loss of life, injury to a person, or damage to the health of a person or to the environment.
Hot Zone	The area immediately surrounding the source of the release of the hazardous material. The concentration of the hazard in this zone may pose a critical threat to persons, property and the environment.
NOA	Naturally Occurring Asbestos - Is asbestos mineral in its natural form in soil or rock. Asbestos in soil or asbestos rock veins can be different colours: blue, brown, green, or white.
Owner/ occupier	A person who is taken to be in possession of premises or a person having the charge, management or control of premises.
PPC/PPE	Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment - Protective clothing and equipment designed to protect a person from injury or infection, e.g. firefighting ensemble, respiratory protective equipment, boots, helmet, gloves, goggles, flash hood, mask.
RPE	Respiratory Protective Equipment - is Personal Protective Equipment (certified to Australian Standards) that is designed to protect the wearer from inhalation of airborne contaminants and other hazardous substances.
SCBA	Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus - A form of respiratory protection which supplies clean breathing air to the wearer from a compressed air cylinder. Expired breath is passed to waste via an exhalation valve incorporated in the facemask.



Appendix One: Contacts

Name	Phone
SafeWork NSW – Asbestos / Demolition Hotline	(02) 8260 5885
SafeWork Information Centre	13 10 50
Department of Environment and Climate Change	(02) 9995 5000
Environment Line	13 15 55
NSW Environment Solutions	1300 655 1116

Appendix Two: Asbestos Decontamination Process



Wash Down Area

- Establish a wash down area and set up equipment following instructions contained within the Decontamination Kit and as described in this Operational Protocol.
- Wash down area should be positioned external to the hot zone, on solid ground and upwind of the incident. Preference should be given to ground that slopes towards the area confirmed or suspected of being contaminated.
- One (or more) member(s) should be designated to assist with the decontamination procedure.
- Firefighters undergoing decontamination must wear a P2 mask or SCBA until the decontamination process is complete.

Decontamination Process

- **Step 1:**
 - Firefighter undergoing decontamination has outer clothing thoroughly wetted down by the application of a fine water spray.
 - Firefighter removes helmet and goggles (if applicable).



- **Step 2:**
 - Separate helmet neck flap, and place neck flap in the contaminated clothing bag provided.
 - Helmet and goggles are set aside for the equipment cleaning procedure.
- **Step 3:**
 - Gloves to be placed in Contaminated Waste bags with other material for disposal.
 - Firefighter undergoing decontamination moves forward to disrobing area.
 - Determine if boots are to be removed and set aside for equipment cleaning.
 - If boots are to be re-worn, care must be exercised to ensure re-contamination does not occur.
 - Protective clothing to be removed and placed in a contaminated clothing bag.
 - Label contaminated clothing bags with PPC contents and quantities along with Brigade details.
- **Step 4:**
 - Once soft garments are removed and placed in a contaminated clothing bag and other apparatus is set aside for equipment cleaning, fire fighter/s undergoing decontamination shall dry themselves as necessary with disposable towelling provided in the decontamination kit.
 - All waste used in the decontamination procedure including disposable P2 masks and towelling must be placed in a separate contaminated waste materials bag provided in the decontamination kit.
- **Step 5:**
 - Fire fighter/s undergoing decontamination moves forward to the clean area and dons disposable overalls. Decontamination assistants do not move into the clean area or further assist decontaminated fire fighter/s.
 - Decontaminated fire fighter/s proceed away from the clean area.
 - Upon completion of equipment decontamination, assistants should proceed to the designated clean area to remove disposable overalls, gloves and masks. Disposable materials must be placed in the contaminated waste bag.

Equipment

- Equipment that requires decontamination includes, but is not limited to, goggles, torches, and SCBA sets. Additionally, any equipment that was utilised within the hot zone that is suspected or confirmed as being contaminated.
- **Step 1:**
 - Equipment to be decontaminated should be located in the wet/disrobing section within the area used for personal decontamination.
- **Step 2:**
 - Equipment to be thoroughly washed down with water. Post wash down, all surfaces to be wiped with towelling provided in the decontamination kit. Other suitable cloth or paper materials may be utilised if necessary.
 - All materials utilised for the wipe down procedure are to be placed in the contaminated waste materials bag provided in the decontamination kit.
 - Particular care must be taken in the cleaning process to ensure that all surfaces are wiped down. The material utilised for the wipe down procedure should be replaced at frequent intervals. Towelling or cloth must not be wrung out and reused.

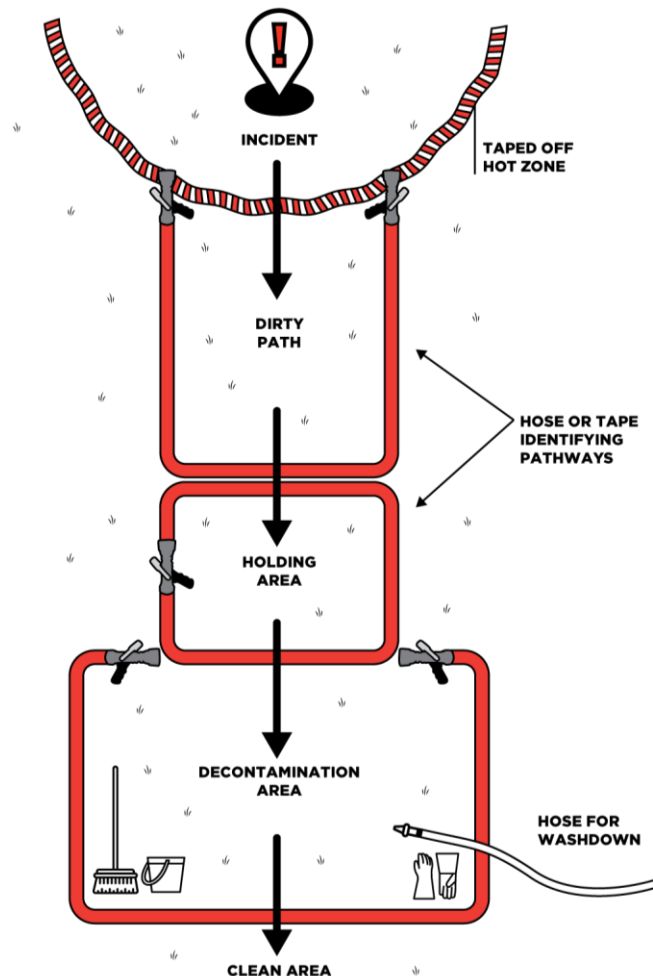


Incidents: Asbestos Containing Materials

Operational Protocol

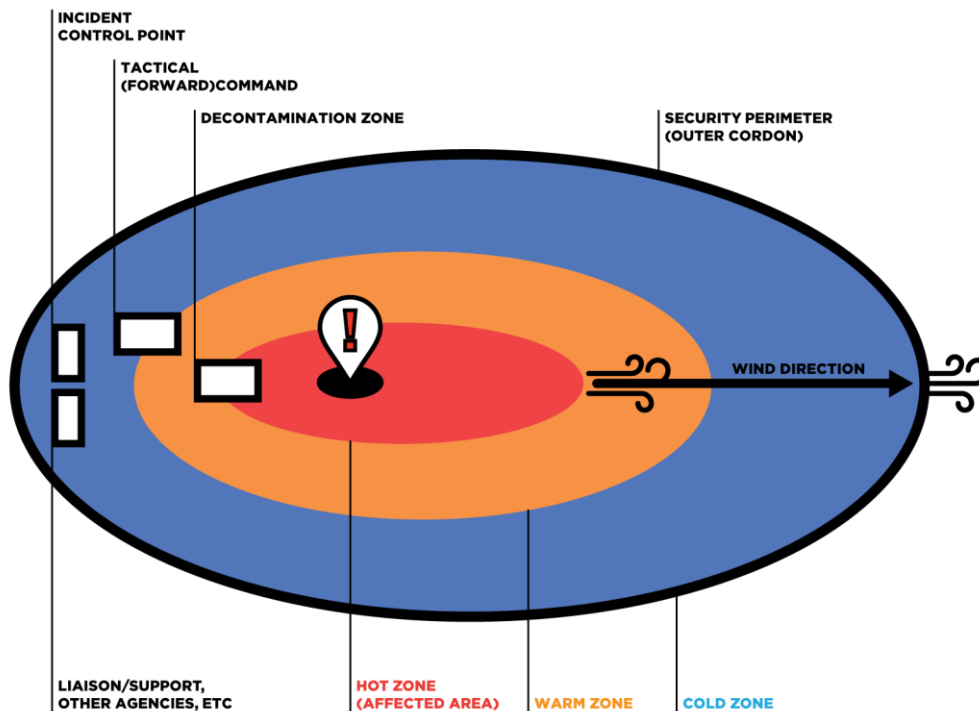
- **Step 3:**
 - Cleaned equipment should be re-stowed without delay. Take care to avoid mixing cleaned and uncleaned equipment.
- **Step 4:**
 - On completion of equipment decontamination, assistants should proceed to the designated clean area to remove disposable overalls, gloves and mask. Disposable materials must be placed in contaminated waste bag.
- **Step 5:**
 - Lay-flat hose contaminated with asbestos fibres must be treated as hazardous waste and must be placed in the contaminated waste bag for disposal.
 - Lay flat hose utilised at the incident but not suspected of being contaminated (i.e. relay or supply) should be cleaned following the equipment decontamination procedure.
 - Vehicles parked within the hot zone are to be thoroughly hosed down before leaving the site.

Appendix Three: Decontamination Model





Appendix Four: Zoning of an ACM Incident and Decontamination Zone



Appendix Five: Asbestos Laundering Contractors and Procurement Process

Laundering Procurement less than \$3,000.00

- Raise a request for purchase in SAP Concur.
- When payment is required by the vendor payment via a corporate credit card is to be utilised.
- Reconciliation through SAP Concur is to use the Safety Unit Cost Centre of 30015. The Dry Cleaning GL code is 512210.
- This transaction will escalate to the Manager Safety for approval

Laundering Procurement greater than \$3,000.00

- Raise and submit a Purchase Requisition and attach the supplier quote in the SAP Portal. The Safety Unit Cost Centre of 30015 and Dry Cleaning GL code of 512210 is to be utilised.
- The Manager Safety will assess and approve if appropriate. A purchase order will be sent to the supplier via the SAP Portal.
- Once approved organise to have the asbestos-contaminated PPC/PPE transported for laundering.
- Once laundering is completed and items have been returned to the District complete a "Goods Receipt" in SAP.



Incidents: Asbestos Containing Materials

Operational Protocol

Transportation of PPC/PPE to Laundering Suppliers

- Transportation costs will be charged to the district cost centre.
- Contact TOLL on 13 88 44 and quote account number S75512 (Note: this account specifically relates to the transport of Asbestos Contaminated PPC/PPE and cannot be used for other purposes).
- If TOLL is not available, the district is to seek transport through local arrangements (i.e. staff or operational support brigade). Contaminated waste bags are not to be transported in the passenger compartment of vehicles.
- If TOLL is not available the use of alternative Courier Services may be used by the district at their expense.

Appendix Six: Asbestos Material – Housing

