



Government
of South Australia

SafeWork SA

ASBESTOS AND THE HOME MECHANIC

A basic guide on what you need
to know about asbestos



safeworksa

DISCLAIMER

This publication contains information regarding occupational health and safety. It includes some of your obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety legislation that SafeWork SA administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate acts and regulations.

This publication may refer to legislation that has been amended or repealed. When reading this publication you should always refer to the latest laws.

DOES YOUR VEHICLE CONTAIN MATERIALS MADE FROM ASBESTOS?

There are many vehicles still in use that have asbestos in their brake pads/shoes, gaskets or clutch plates. While performing maintenance work on your vehicle you may become exposed to asbestos.

In most vehicles, it may be hard or sometimes impossible to identify those parts containing asbestos. If you are unsure, you should use the same safety measures you would use if the parts did contain asbestos.

Brake pads, brake shoes and clutch plates containing asbestos suffer wear during use, leaving a coating of asbestos fibres and dust on them and surrounding parts.

The asbestos in cylinder head and exhaust gaskets can become friable (powdery) with heat, and will easily release dust and fibres when disturbed. Dry brushing any of these parts or even tapping them can release asbestos fibres into the air.

Since 31 December 2003, the use of all forms of asbestos has been banned nationally (with only a few very specific exemptions).

Although Australian Customs regulations prohibit the importation of all goods containing asbestos, sometimes some of these types of goods still enter the country.

Therefore it is important that when you purchase imported goods, check that they do not contain asbestos.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Inhalation of asbestos fibres can cause asbestosis, lung cancer or mesothelioma. This does not necessarily mean that your health is at risk if you find that your vehicle does contain materials made from asbestos.

Health problems usually occur when people are unaware of the hazards of working with products containing asbestos. It is important that you always work so there is minimal release of dust or small particles from the material containing asbestos.

Asbestos becomes a health risk when large amounts of asbestos fibres are released into the air and inhaled. If you use commonsense and follow safety guidelines, products containing asbestos should not be a safety problem.

SAFE WORK PROCEDURES

Minimise the risks by using the following safety control measures when working on your vehicle's brakes, clutches and cylinder head/exhaust gaskets:

- Avoid windy locations and cooling fans to prevent fibres being dispersed
- wear ***disposable coveralls** and a ***P1 or P2 disposable dust respirator (Australian Standard Approved)** - and ensure that you follow correctly the instructions on how to wear the respirator
- Tape a ***thick plastic sheet (200 micron)** on the floor under the removal area to catch any spillage and to make clean-up easier
- During the dismantling and removal process, use a ***hand held spray bottle** to continually dampen the dust in order to prevent fibres from being dispersed. After you have done this, wipe down parts in the immediate area with a wet rag
- Use rags only once, then place in a ***plastic bag (200 micron)** or wrap in a ***plastic sheet (200 micron)** for disposal. See 'Safe disposal'
- wipe any spillage onto the ground or floor and dispose of in the same way.

***Your hardware store can supply all of the materials and equipment you will need.**

Note: Used respirators and coveralls should be disposed of in the same way as other asbestos waste. See 'Safe disposal'.

IMPORTANT!

- A domestic or standard vacuum cleaner must **NOT** be used for cleaning dust containing asbestos, as the asbestos will pass right through the filter and blow back into the air. If you use a vacuum cleaner it must be an industrial type fitted with a *high efficiency particulate air* (HEPA) filter.

SAFE DISPOSAL

Dispose of all asbestos waste promptly. For safety always:

- **wrap asbestos waste** in thick plastic or place in a thick plastic bag (200 micron), tape and label with '**CAUTION ASBESTOS, DO NOT INHALE DUST**'. Do not put asbestos waste in domestic garbage bins. Remove all asbestos waste from the site as soon as possible
- **dispose of asbestos waste** in a manner and at a site approved by your local council or the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). Asbestos can only be dumped at approved disposal sites. The EPA can advise you of the location of these sites. See 'Help and advice' for contact numbers.

HELP AND ADVICE

RESOURCES

The following resources provide more detail on the safe removal of asbestos products:

- The *Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations, 1995* – Division 4.2
- *Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos* 2nd Edition [NOHSC: 2002 (2005)] - effective 23 February 2007 (available at www.ascc.gov.au)
- *Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in Workplaces* [NOHSC: 2018 (2005)] - effective 23 February 2007 (available at www.ascc.gov.au)
- SafeWork SA's *Asbestos and the Home Renovator* publication
- SafeWork SA's website: www.safework.sa.gov.au

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about working with products containing asbestos, contact:

SafeWork SA

Help and Early Intervention Centre

Telephone: 1300 365 255

Mineral Fibres Unit

Telephone: (08) 8303 0405

Website: www.safework.sa.gov.au

Environment Protection Authority (EPA)

Telephone: (08) 8204 2004 (metro) or 1800 623 445

Website: www.epa.sa.gov.au

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HELP AND EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRE

100 Waymouth Street, Adelaide

HELP CENTRE

Telephone: **1300 365 255**

Email: help@safework.sa.gov.au

To report all serious workplace accidents and incidents
telephone **1800 777 209** (24 hour service)

LIBRARY

Telephone: (08) 8204 8877

Facsimile: (08) 8204 8883

Email: library@safework.sa.gov.au

BOOKSHOP

Telephone: (08) 8204 8881 or (08) 8204 8882

Facsimile: (08) 8204 8883

Email: bookshop@safework.sa.gov.au

Opening hours from 8.30am - 5.30pm,

Monday to Friday (the Help Centre
closes at 4.15pm on Wednesdays)

HEAD OFFICE

Level 3, 1 Richmond Road, Keswick

GPO Box 465, Adelaide, SA 5001

DX 715, Adelaide

COUNTRY OFFICES

BERRI

30 Kay Avenue, Berri

PO Box 346, Berri SA 5343

Telephone: **(08) 8595 2199**

MOUNT GAMBIER

Level 1, 11 Helen Street, Mount Gambier

PO Box 871, Mount Gambier SA 5290

Telephone: **(08) 8735 1199**

PORT LINCOLN

Civic Centre, Suite 10, 60 Tasman Terrace, Port Lincoln

PO Box 2862, Port Lincoln SA 5606

Telephone: **(08) 8688 3057**

PORT PIRIE

Level 1, 104 Florence Street, Port Pirie

PO Box 462, Port Pirie SA 5540

Telephone: **(08) 8638 4777**

WHYALLA

15-17 Horwood Street, Whyalla

PO Box 696, Whyalla SA 5600

Telephone: **(08) 8648 8733**

To speak to SafeWork SA in a language other than English,
contact the Interpreting and Translating Centre on
(08) 8226 1990 and ask them to contact SafeWork SA.
This interpreting service is available at no cost to you.

www.safework.sa.gov.au