



Australian Government

Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs

Asbestos surveying in the 73 NTER communities

The Australian Government and Northern Territory Government are working together to manage asbestos in your community. Your health and safety is our primary concern.

In the coming weeks, professional asbestos surveyors will be in your community to finish identifying and recording details of all known asbestos containing materials (ACM). Not all buildings could be accessed during the first inspections, so this work will ensure your community survey is accurate and complete.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos comes from a natural mineral has been used in many building materials such as insulation, tiles and cement sheeting because it is heat and acid resistant. Asbestos is made up of tiny fibres, which can be hazardous if released into the air when ACM is disturbed or crushed. Not all asbestos is dangerous – most ACM left undisturbed does not pose a health risk.

Follow up survey work

To help manage asbestos in your community, all ACM needs to be identified and recorded in an Asbestos Register. Getting this information involves professional surveyors inspecting all buildings (inside and outside), vacant lots and recreational areas. They often take photographs and samples to help with this.

Most of this work has already been done, so surveyors may not need to come to your house. Your GBM will let you know what buildings and areas the surveyors will need access to and will keep you informed about the work being done.

After the survey is completed

If the surveyors don't identify any ACM in your community, no further action is required. If ACM is identified which is likely to pose an immediate risk, steps will be taken to minimise the risk until the ACM can be removed by a licensed removalist as soon as possible. During the initial surveys, only 3 examples of ACM were found requiring immediate removal in total in the 73 communities surveyed.

ACM identified as being in poor condition and which may pose an unacceptable risk if it is further damaged will be removed over the next 12 to 18 months. This is a big task and we appreciate your patience.

You should never try to remove ACM yourself, as disturbing it can be a health risk. The ACM will be removed by licensed removalists and disposed of at a licensed landfill facility, where it will pose no risk to your community.

Details of remaining ACM will be entered into an Asbestos Register so it can be managed in the future. This includes making sure anyone living or working in these buildings are aware of the presence of ACM. With the approval of those responsible for the management of these buildings, signs will be put in place to show when a building has remaining ACM.

The Australian Government supports employment of local people but asbestos removal work can be hazardous and workers have to be specially trained and have regular health checks including hospital chest x-rays.

If in doubt, ask your GBM

The Australian Government is serious about addressing your concerns regarding asbestos. Please talk to your GBM about any aspect of the process.

For more information contact your GBM or Shire Services Manager.

Information correct as at 7 August 2009.

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