



05 September, 2024

Re: Removing Asbestos in Schools (MOE Sites, and any property owned by MOE) – Guidelines
Source: Ministry of Education

When removing asbestos in a school in New Zealand, especially those managed by the Ministry of Education, several key requirements and procedures must be followed to ensure safety and compliance with regulations.

1. Regulatory Framework

- **Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016:** These regulations govern the handling, removal, and disposal of asbestos in New Zealand. They aim to protect workers and the public from the risks associated with asbestos exposure.

2. Pre-Removal Planning

- **Asbestos Survey:** Before any removal work, a thorough asbestos survey (or asbestos management survey) must be conducted to identify and assess the presence of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) in the school environment. This survey should be carried out by a licensed asbestos assessor.
- **Risk Assessment:** Conduct a detailed risk assessment to determine the level of risk associated with the asbestos removal process. This includes evaluating the condition of the asbestos-containing materials and the potential for fibre release.

3. Air Monitoring Requirements

- **Background Air Monitoring:** This should be conducted before any removal work begins to establish a baseline level of asbestos fibres in the air.
- **During Removal:** Continuous or periodic air monitoring may be required during the removal process to ensure that asbestos fibres are not being released into the air beyond permissible levels.
- **Clearance Air Monitoring:** After the removal work is completed, clearance air monitoring is required to confirm that the area is safe for reoccupation. This involves sampling the air in the area to ensure that asbestos fibre levels are below the acceptable limits.

4. Control Measures

- **Containment:** Use appropriate containment measures to prevent asbestos fibres from being released into the surrounding environment. This typically includes setting up barriers, using negative pressure enclosures, and employing proper sealing techniques.
- **Dust Control:** Implement dust control measures such as wetting down materials to prevent the generation of airborne asbestos fibres.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Ensure that all workers involved in the removal process wear appropriate PPE, including respirators, disposable coveralls, gloves, and eye protection.

5. Removal Procedures

- **Licensed Contractors:** Asbestos removal work must be carried out by licensed asbestos removalists who are trained and accredited to handle asbestos safely.
- **Work Practices:** Follow safe work practices as outlined in the regulations, including proper handling, removal, and disposal of asbestos-containing materials.

6. Waste Management

- **Disposal:** Asbestos waste must be properly packaged, labelled, and disposed of at a facility licensed to handle asbestos waste. Ensure that all disposal practices comply with local regulations.

7. Documentation and Reporting

- **Record-Keeping:** Maintain detailed records of the asbestos removal process, including air monitoring results, risk assessments, removal procedures, and disposal documentation.
- **Notification:** Notify WorkSafe New Zealand if the asbestos removal work is significant or if there are any incidents or breaches of safety protocols.

8. Ministry of Education Guidelines

- **Specific Procedures:** Follow any additional guidelines and procedures set out by the Ministry of Education, which may include stricter protocols or additional requirements for managing asbestos in educational environments.
- **Consultation:** Engage with the Ministry of Education or their representatives to ensure compliance with any specific policies or procedures related to asbestos management in schools.

9. Reoccupation

- **Inspection and Clearance:** After the completion of the removal and clearance air monitoring, an inspection should be conducted to verify that the area is safe for reoccupation. This typically involves a visual inspection and confirmation from a licensed asbestos assessor.

By adhering to these detailed requirements, you ensure that asbestos removal in schools is conducted safely, minimizing health risks to students, staff, and others in the vicinity.