

# SUSPECTED ASBESTOS-CONTAINING MATERIALS

For information about the health risks of asbestos and how to identify suspected asbestos-containing materials in your home, please read the booklet *All About Asbestos*.

## 1. SUSPECTED ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIAL IN SOUND CONDITION

Asbestos-containing material is not a risk to your health, providing it is in sound condition and is not disturbed. We therefore recommend that you leave undisturbed any suspected asbestos-containing material that is in sound condition.

If you own the property and wish to remove any suspected asbestos-containing material, we recommend that you first have the material tested for the presence of asbestos. Precautions to take when collecting a sample are given overleaf. Some quality-assured laboratories that test for asbestos include:

1. *Dowdell and Associates*  
4 Cain Road, Penrose, Auckland 1642, Email: [info@dowdellassociates.co.nz](mailto:info@dowdellassociates.co.nz), ph 09 526 0246
2. *Capital Environmental Services*  
CES P.O Box 38-328 Wellington - Email: [fibres@ihug.co.nz](mailto:fibres@ihug.co.nz), ph 04 566 3311

Alternatively, you can assume that the material does contain asbestos and take the precautions described in this leaflet and in the booklet *Removing Asbestos from the Home*.

## 2. SUSPECTED ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIAL IN POOR CONDITION

Suspected asbestos containing material may pose a risk to health if they are in the following condition in an occupied residential dwelling:

- the material is friable (**easily crumbled**), *or*
- the material is **loose, dusty, fluffy** or **flaking**, *or*
- the material is showing signs of **mildew** or **mould damage**, *or*
- **significant** cracks are appearing in the material, *or*
- the material is **not securely fastened**

Please follow the instructions overleaf for sampling of suspected asbestos containing materials. If you are a tenant you should first consult your landlord if sampling is likely to damage any property that is not your own.

If you have more than one potential asbestos hazard, for example two rooms with textured ceilings installed at different times with possibly different materials; then please discuss this with a Health Protection Officer with your local Public Health Unit before proceeding. If you are in the Auckland region then contact Auckland Regional Public Health Service, phone (09) 623 4600.

Any enquiries about asbestos in the workplace should be directed to the Occupational Safety and Health Service of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) – Labour Group on freephone **0800 20 90 20**.

### 3. HOW TO TAKE A SAMPLE FOR ASBESTOS TESTING

***DO NOT MIX SAMPLES OF DIFFERENT MATERIALS***  
***Sample carefully, or the test result will be invalid.***

1. Cover your mouth and nose with a dust mask e.g. from a hardware retailer.
2. Reduce dust by soaking the suspected asbestos-containing material with water.
3. Use a tool (such as a knife or spatula) to collect the sample into a good-quality plastic bag. Use a separate bag to obtain a representative sample of each material to be tested.
  - For each ceiling cladding to be tested, take a heaped teaspoonful from two different areas of the same ceiling, giving a tablespoonful in total.
  - For each floor covering to be tested, a full thickness, 25mm square (1 square inch), piece of the material is needed (including the adhesive layer).
  - Be careful to keep samples from different materials completely separate at all times to prevent cross contamination.
4. Seal the plastic bag with sticky tape.  
Send the sealed plastic bag (securely packaged and with name, property address and phone number) for testing.

### 4. WHAT IF THE RESULT OF THE ASBESTOS TEST IS POSITIVE?

If the test shows that the material does contain asbestos, our office would recommend that you seek professional asbestos removal companies to remove the asbestos material. We can send you standard information about your options, which is also available on our website [www.arphs.govt.nz](http://www.arphs.govt.nz), and also are available by phone for further advice. Should asbestos-containing material be in poor condition, we will recommend its removal or encapsulation (i.e. sealing).

### 5. WHAT PRECAUTIONS DO I TAKE IF I WANT TO REMOVE ASBESTOS-CONTAINING MATERIAL?

We recommend that asbestos-containing material is removed or encapsulated by professionals (some are listed under "Asbestos" in the yellow pages). The Occupational Safety and Health Service of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) – Labour Group administers the Health and Safety in Employment (Asbestos) Regulations 1998. Under these Regulations, employers and employees must take precautions to protect health. "Restricted work" must be performed or directly supervised by someone with a current Certificate of Competence from MBIE, and must be notified to MBIE prior to commencement. We recommend that you contact MBIE before a contractor begins work - to ensure that the relevant procedures have been followed and appropriate precautions will be taken.

If you wish to remove or encapsulate the asbestos-containing material yourself, please refer to the booklet *Removing Asbestos from the Home*, which maybe posted to you or is available on our website, and contact us if you have any further questions.

### 6. FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Auckland Regional Public Health Service, ph (09) 623 4600.
- Occupational Safety and Health (*workplace issues*) - under Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) – Labour Group on freephone 0800 20 90 20 or Email: [info@dol.govt.nz](mailto:info@dol.govt.nz).
- Your local authority (Council) (*asbestos waste disposal facilities in your area; Health Act and Building Act investigation and enforcement issues*). Auckland Council phone is (09) 301 0101.
- Tenancy Services (*landlord/tenant issues* – listed under "Building and Housing", - under Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment on 0800 TENANCY (0800 83 62 62) or Email: [info@dbh.govt.nz](mailto:info@dbh.govt.nz)