Practice Note # 5

This document is intended to provide guidance to workers and the self-employed and is meant to supplement or support the PCBU's own policies.

REMEMBER:

- **Asbestos fibre exposure can cause fatal lung cancer and diseases**
- **You must also be trained to work safely with asbestos**

Essential Information:
Also refer to the following NZDAA guidance sheets:

- **#1 Personal protective equipment (including RPE)**
- **#2 Selection of personal decontamination**
- **#3 What to do if you accidentally discover or disturb asbestos during your work**
- **#4 Disposal of Asbestos Waste**

Caution:
AC roofs are always fragile and cannot bear weight.

Caution:
Be aware of AC debris on the ground, be careful not to crush this and clear away before lining ground with polythene. Place in asbestos waste bag for disposal.

Removing asbestos cement (AC) sheets, gutters etc. and dismantling of small AC structures

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove AC sheets, gutters, drains, ridge caps etc. on a small scale, or dismantling a small structure (e.g., shed or garage) as long as the AC stays intact during removal.

AC removal is defined as Class B, and any AC removal =/+10m^2 (over the entire job) is notifiable and must be removed by a licensed asbestos removalist.

This sheet does not apply to large scale work or mechanical demolition – a full risk assessment and plan of work will need to be prepared.

This practice note is not appropriate if other asbestos-containing materials are present.

Before removal

- =/+10m^2 of AC must be notified to Worksafe New Zealand
- =/+ 10m^2 and removed by a licensed removalist and an asbestos removal control plan prepared. Licensed removalists can be found here
- Use a licensed asbestos assessor (LAA) for clearances and any air monitoring during removal if determined necessary.
- Confirm with the LAA / building owner that only AC is present. A licensed assessor can be found here
- Confirm with the LAA for their clearance procedures beforehand
- Obtain disposal permit for waste disposal if required

Preparing the Work Area

- Safe access for removal workers must be provided
- If the disposal bin cannot be situated close to the removal area, then a lined transit route should be installed (refer Practice Note 3)
- Restrict access to the removal area and transit route using barriers or tape. Install warning signage to barriers and access points
- Reduce the risk of cross contamination to other areas – close off doors, windows and seal any penetrations and ducting returning to other areas etc.

Equipment

- 200micron polythene plastic sheeting and tape
- Warning signage
- Bolt cutter or screwdriver
- Garden type sprayer containing wetting / bonding agent (i.e., PVA mixed with water at 1:7 ratio)
- Asbestos waste bags & clear polythene bags
- HEPA vacuum (rated H (high risk) for asbestos) and electrical leads
- Water buckets and rags
- Covered skip bin for larger quantities of waste
- Decontamination facilities (refer Practice Note 2)

PPE – refer Practice Note #1

- Disposable coveralls fitted with a hood
- Boots without laces
- Respiratory protective equipment (min. P2)

Procedure

- Protect access equipment and nearby surfaces (including behind or under sheets) from contamination. Cover ground areas with 200µm polythene plastic and fix with tape to non-asbestos surfaces.

Removal

- All removal techniques must avoid or minimise the breaking of AC
- To assist with removing the AC intact the removalist may need to remove any items attached to the AC including timber strips, guttering, downpipes and flashings. Any brackets or material directly attached to the AC should be disposed of as asbestos waste if it cannot be thoroughly cleaned
- Spray sheets on all exposed areas using garden sprayer and wetting agent – allow time for the agent to dry particularly for removing roofs to prevent slips
- If fasteners (screws) are in place, dampen and remove them using drill driver and place them in asbestos waste bag
- If the sheets are bolted in place, dampen, and cut the bolts from the underside / back of the sheet while carefully avoiding contact with the AC and place them in asbestos waste bag
- AC should be lowered to ground not dropped. Sheets should be placed directly into lined waste bin or stacked carefully in polythene lined, secure area. Waste bins should be located as close as possible to the removal area. Bins should be wetted down during filling to minimise dust.
- Any debris, materials including insulation, dust, birds' nests must be removed and placed in asbestos waste bag
- HEPA vacuum and wipe down area including beams and purlins with wet rags

Cleaning and disposal – refer Practice Note 4

- Asbestos supervisor should visually inspect the removal area to ensure there is no dust and debris in the removal area
- All equipment used must be wiped down with wet rags
- Check for debris in fastener or bolt holes and clean with damp rags
- All debris, used rags, polythene sheeting and other waste must be placed into the lined bin or asbestos waste bag and taped closed
- All asbestos waste bags must be double bagged in clear polythene bags and taped closed
- Asbestos waste must be removed from the worksite as soon as practicable and disposed at a licensed disposal facility.

Use of power tools

- Use of electrical equipment such as saws and drills directly on the AC is not permitted unless
    - The equipment is enclosed or
    - The equipment is designed to capture or suppress asbestos fibres and is used in accordance with its design or
    - The equipment is used in a way to capture or suppress asbestos fibres safely

Partial removal of AC

- Should partial removal of AC be required, the removalist should removal full sheets of AC not part of a sheet
- Any exposed edges of AC must be encapsulated with a sealant

Decontamination facilities

See Practice Note 2

Clearances

- Signage and barriers cannot be removed until clearances are obtained
- Visual inspection by LAA will be required
- Clearance air sampling is not normally required
- Surface sampling is not normally required