

# Practice Note # 2



**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 cancers 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)**
- **#3 What to do if you accidentally discover or disturb asbestos during your work**
- **#4 Disposal of Asbestos Waste**

## Selection of Personal Decontamination

### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes how to select the right decontamination facility so workers can properly decontaminate themselves after work with asbestos materials.

Personal decontamination is important and must be done properly as it reduces the risk of workers taking asbestos fibres home, in their car, and on their clothing and exposing whanau and friends to potential health risks.

Personal decontamination is easier when workers wear the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) – such as outlined in Sheet #1.

Ideally, decontamination facilities should be hard fixed to the removal area, however, in some circumstances, this may be impractical – in these instances a lined, and secure transit route (with associated procedures) that also prevents entry by non-removal workers will be required.

### Selecting the right decontamination facility

Selecting the most appropriate decontamination facility for the removal job is important as it reduces the risk of personnel bringing out asbestos fibres, but also the risk of high fibre counts during air monitoring.

The PCBU (the licensed asbestos removalist) must undertake a risk assessment to select the right type of decontamination facility, and procedures to be provided for workers. The risk assessment should take into consideration:

- The type of asbestos containing material being removed, and its friability
- The methods being used to remove the asbestos, and suppress airborne fibres
- The location (indoors, outdoors), size of the area for the facilities, including confined spaces
- The concentration of airborne fibres (to be determined by background monitoring before the job starts); or the concentration of asbestos fibres (w/w)
- The number of workers that will use the facilities
- The duration of the removal
- Access to water, power, and trade waste
- Whether waste or tools, equipment shall need to pass through the facility.

### Types of decontamination facilities

#### Plastic drop sheet

Minimal decontamination consisting of plastic sheeting laid on ground with wet wipes / spray water bottle, and ideally a HEPA vacuum, rags, and foot bath. This must be set up in an area adjacent to the working area and be secured to prevent people not associated with the asbestos works from entering.

#### Recommended uses:

- Initial emergency response
- Short duration repairs or maintenance works involving asbestos material
- Inspection works
- Short duration ACM soils (less than 2 working days) not exceeding recreational levels for bonded ACM (0.02%w/w)



### Disposable airlock / decontamination systems

An aluminum framed temporary clip system with prefabricated, single use (i.e., disposed of after the job is completed) polythene “bladders” that can be constructed in cubicles. Inside it will contain a spray bottle, HEPA vacuum, rags, and a foot bath.

Recommended uses:

- Initial emergency response
- Class B removal works
- Class A removal – only in a very narrow set of circumstances, may be permissible and in collaboration with, and agreement with the LAA. Air monitoring within the removal area may be required to confirm that removal methods do not create respiratory fibres in excess of 0.02fibres/ml air
- ACM soils of concentrations not exceeding recreational levels for bonded ACM (0.02%w/w)

### Decontamination trailers

A self-contained mobile unit that has showers, airlocks, and change area. Will have water filtration unit and battery fitted, and in most cases, a califont. These are customized to suit the removalists requirements – lockers, hand washing & dryers, eye flush out stations, first aid can be fitted.

Recommended uses:

- Initial emergency response
- Class B removal works
- Class A removal – hard fixed into the removal area, with an airlock, unless using transit procedures
- ACM soils of all concentrations (bonded, FA and AF)

### Modular decontamination units

A unit of 3 or more sturdy individual compartments directly attached to the removal area with an airlock, that lock together with dirty, showers, and clean areas. Requires access to power, water, and trade waste, as it has its own water filtration unit. If used outdoors, must be protected against the weather.

Recommended uses:

- Initial emergency response
- Class B removal works
- Class A removal – hard fixed into the removal area, with an airlock, unless using transit procedures
- ACM soils of all concentrations (bonded, FA and AF)

### Standard procedures for any decontamination facility

- Access to the decontamination unit must be secured, where practicable, to prevent entry by non-workers during and after working hours
- Appropriate hazard signage must be fixed to the entrances of decontamination facilities
- Must be kept clean, dry, and free of dust and debris
- Workers must be trained in the correct use of the facilities, and ideally observed using the facilities correctly
- Water filtration facilities and power to the decontamination unit can be turned off when the facility is not in use
- Should be inspected regularly when in use for damage to seals, doors, trays, and blockages to water outlets

