

# Practice Note # 01



**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:

- #2 Selection of personal decontamination
- #3 What to do if you accidentally discover or disturb asbestos during your work
- #4 Disposal of Asbestos Waste



## Personal Protective Equipment (including respiratory protection equipment) for Asbestos Removal

### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes what personal protective equipment (including respiratory protection) you will need when working with or removing asbestos containing materials.

Personal protective equipment is the last line of defense against asbestos fibres and does not replace the requirement to use methods, and to take all reasonable precautions to avoid the release of fibres into the air when working with or on asbestos containing materials.

**Always use the bathroom before putting on asbestos PPE.**

**Asbestos PPE MUST NOT BE WORN in public spaces or outside of the working areas.**

### Overalls

- Disposable coveralls – Type 5 / 6 are required to provide protection against airborne particles
- Overalls are one time use only
- Wear light clothing underneath to reduce heat stress
- Wear one size larger to reduce the risk of the overall ripping at the seams
- Tape cuffs at wrists if they are loose
- Wear the overall legs over footwear (i.e., gumboots) to prevent dust from getting into boots
- The hood to the overalls must go over the straps to the RPE.
- Used coveralls must be disposed of as asbestos waste

### Gloves

- If wearing gloves, use single use gloves.
- If specific gloves are required for the task (i.e., cut resistant gloves) they must stay in the removal area for the duration of the removal
- Dispose of used gloves as asbestos waste.
- Tape up gloves to coveralls to prevent material and fibres from getting inside.

### Footwear

- Non lace up boots are required as they are easier to clean. Gumboots are ideal.
- Always have the coveralls OVER the boots to prevent material and fibres from getting inside
- Disposable overshoes can cause a slipping risk, therefore are only recommended for short duration tasks

### Respirator Protective Equipment (RPE)

- Asbestos RPE must comply with AS/NZS 1716:2012 Respiratory Protective Devices
- Suitable types of RPE:
  - P2 disposable respirator with filtered exhalation valve certified to AS/NZS1716:2012
  - Half mask respirator with P2/P3 filters that complies with AS/NZS1716:2012
  - Full face respirator with P2/P3 filters that complies with AS/NZS1716:2012. NZDAA strongly recommends only powered

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positive pressure full face respiratory protection be used for all Class A or friable asbestos works.

- This equipment is not suitable for people with beards or stubble. Persons must be clean shaven to ensure the required tight seal is achieved
- The employer must ensure that there are adequate facilities for the worker to clean, maintain, repair, and store their RPE when not in use

#### Fit Testing

- Workers must be medically fit to wear RPE – seek medical advice if unsure
- Fit testing verifies that each wearer has a mask that provides an effective seal against contaminants in the atmosphere – if it is likely that the worker while need to use their RPE regularly, fit testing is recommended
- Fit testing should comply with AS/NZS 1715:2009
- Fit testing must be done annually
- Workers should perform a seal check each time they put on their respirator

#### Training

- The user of the RPE should know:
  - How to check their equipment is working properly before they put it on
  - How to correctly put on their RPE
  - How to check that it fits
  - How to inspect, identify and replace worn or defective parts – this should be done at least monthly, or if the RPE is worn infrequently, every three months
  - To take off their RPE last when going through the decontamination process or at the end of the shift
  - How to change filters regularly and dispose of as asbestos waste
  - Limitations of the RPE they are using
  - How to properly clean, maintain, and store their RPE after use
- How to correctly dispose of disposable PPE/RPE as asbestos waste after one use
- Instruct workers to stop work and leave the area if they think their RPE is not working or if they tear / rip their disposable coveralls.
- Never take used PPE home. RPE must be stored in an airtight container when not in use.