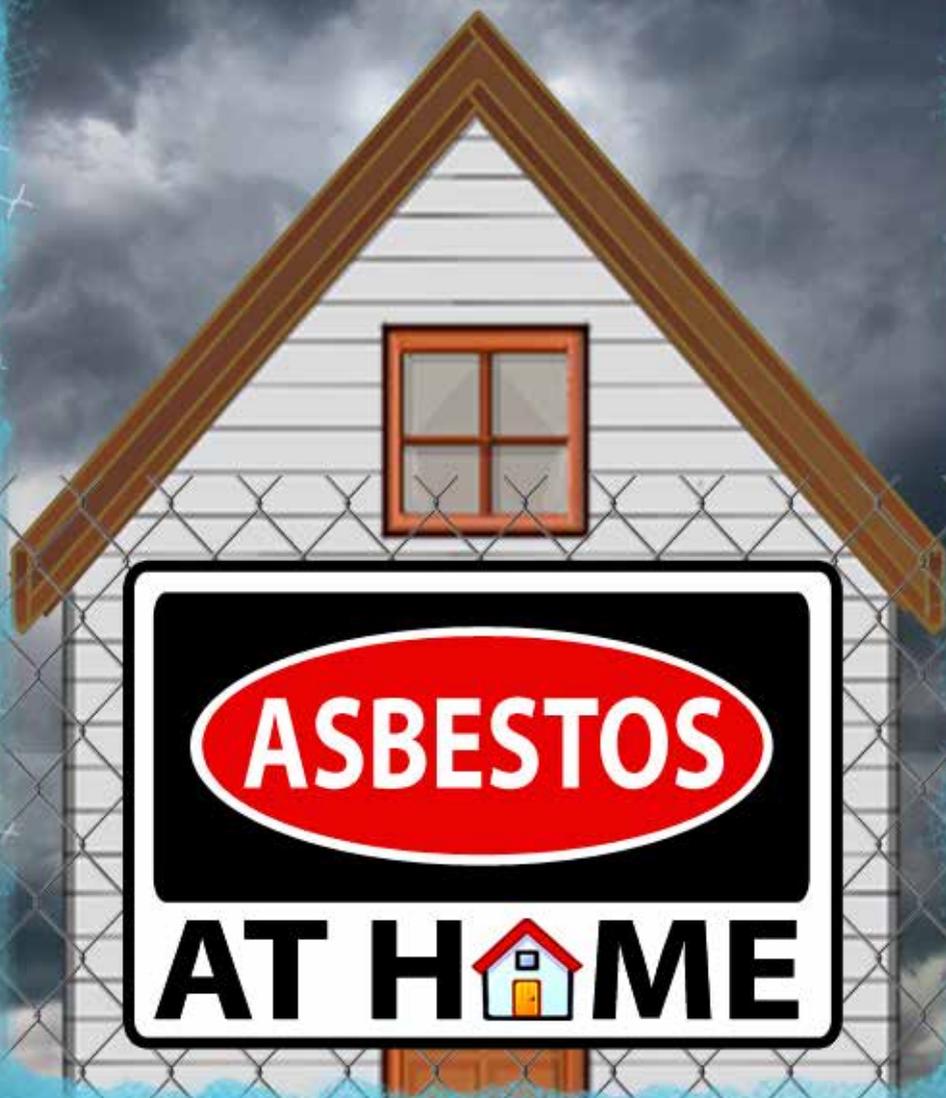


asbestos free tasmania foundation



INFORMATION FOR  
**HOME RENOVATORS**

## Our Sponsors

Asbestos Free Tasmania Foundation (AFTF) would like to thank these organisations for their support with the development, production and distribution of this booklet.



AFTF Inc is providing information only, it is not accredited to provide advice. Please seek advice from a relevant professional. AFTF Inc disclaims all responsibility and all liability for all losses, damages and costs you might incur as a result of the information being inaccurate. This disclaimer extends to information provided by any third party, which is accessed via the websites in this booklet.



## President's forward

Home improvements are an exciting part of owning your own home. Thousands of Tasmanians will be making improvements to their homes now, and into the future. DIY is a growing industry, and we want to see that home renovators and their families are as safe as they can be when doing this work.

This booklet provides a useful guide to asbestos, its significant health risks and where it might be found in your home. Most people are aware of the workers who were exposed to asbestos during the manufacturing of it, or the wave of trades people who have worked with materials that contain it. Thousands of these workers, including people who washed their work clothes, have died from an asbestos related disease. There are now many stories about DIY enthusiasts known as the 'third wave', becoming ill or dying. We don't want any more stories. Be safe, be prepared, and let's eradicate asbestos wherever possible, for the future safety of all Tasmanians.

If you would like to become a member of the AFTF, or would like to support the work of the AFTF in the community, please visit our website [www.asbestosfreetasmania.org.au](http://www.asbestosfreetasmania.org.au)



**Simon Cocker**  
President

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the generic term for a number of fibrous silicate minerals. These are found naturally occurring in rock.

### There are two major groups of asbestos:

**Serpentine group** contains chrysotile, commonly known as white asbestos

**Amphibole group** contains amosite (brown asbestos) and crocidolite (blue asbestos), as well as some other less common types.



crocidolite  
(blue asbestos)



amosite  
(brown asbestos)



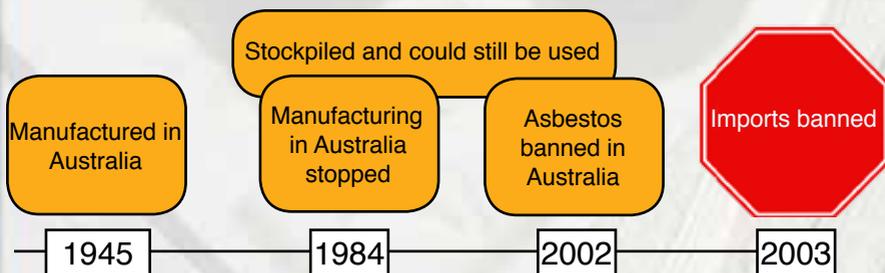
chrysotile  
(white asbestos)

Asbestos was extensively mined, imported and used as a building material in Australia from the mid-1940s through to the mid-1980s. Asbestos was mixed with other materials, like cement or glue to make building products. Around 3000 products were made containing asbestos. These products are known as asbestos containing materials.



Asbestos containing materials were used for a variety of purposes and ideal for fire and water resistance proofing, low electrical conductivity and insulation. A house built before 1990 is likely to contain asbestos products or materials but a house built up to 2003 could contain these too.

### Asbestos Timeline



### How can asbestos fibres impact on health?

Asbestos is formed in fibre bundles and, as it is further processed or disturbed, the fibre bundles become progressively finer and more hazardous to health. The small fibres are the most dangerous. They are invisible to the naked eye and, when inhaled, penetrate the deepest part of the lungs.

*'There is no minimum safe exposure level for any form of asbestos fibres'*

World Health Organisation (WHO)

Significant health risks may arise from the inhalation or ingestion, of airborne asbestos fibres. Breathing in fibres brings a risk of pleural disease, asbestosis and mesothelioma. It can cause cancer of the lung, pharynx, stomach and colorectum. These diseases cause significant health problems and sometimes death.

Asbestosis is the scarring of lung tissue where in severe cases the spongy parts of the lung become stiffened and shrunken. It results in breathlessness that may lead to disability as the disease progresses. It is usually caused by heavy exposure.

*‘Asbestos is a highly toxic, insidious and environmentally persistent material that has killed thousands of Australians and will kill thousands more this century.’*

National Health and Medical  
Research Council

Mesothelioma is a cancer of the pleura (outer lung lining) or the peritoneum (the lining of the abdominal cavity). Mesothelioma rarely occurs less than 15 years after first exposure, and in most cases delays of 30-40 years are common.

Lung cancer can be related to the amount of fibre that is breathed in and the risk of lung cancer is greatly increased in those who also smoke tobacco.

*‘Any amount of asbestos exposure is too much.’*

Health and Safety  
Executive (HSE)

For more information about asbestos  
related diseases visit:  
**[www.asbestosfreetasmania.org.au](http://www.asbestosfreetasmania.org.au)**



## Checklist for the home renovator

Here is a checklist that might help you decide in the first instance, if you have asbestos in your house. If you answer 'yes', or are unsure about any of these questions, have your house inspected by a professional before you undertake any renovations.

You can use the images on pages 9 to 15 to help you identify possible areas where asbestos containing materials or products might be in your home. This is a guide only, there are many other instances where asbestos may be present in the home.

Home renovator's check list	Yes	No	Unsure
Was the house built before 31st December 2003?			
Was the house built after 1945?			
Are any floors covered with linoleum?			
Are any floors covered with vinyl tiles?			
Do you have eaves around the house?			
Do you have eaves in the house?			
Is your guttering anything other than plastic?			
Do you have cladding on the outside of your house or garage?			
Do you have any corrugated looking material that is not clear plastic or corrugated iron on your roof?			
Do you have a roof that has concrete looking tiles?			
Do you have a switchboard with old fuses?			
Do you have any fire doors that were built before 2003?			
Are there original fireplaces in the house?			
Do you have any boilers or pipes with lagging?			

Home renovator's check list	Yes	No	Unsure
Do you have any old concrete looking planters?			
Do you have any super six corrugated fencing?			
Do you have any garage walls or sheds that could have cement sheeting, or corrugated super six sheeting, containing asbestos?			
Do you have a barbecue area that has cement looking board around it or on it?			

## Friable and non-friable asbestos

Materials containing asbestos that are in good condition are safe until asbestos fibres become airborne, which can happen when materials are old, exposed to the elements, tampered with or damaged.

**There are two main conditions that asbestos can be found in:**

### Friable asbestos

is asbestos that is possibly flaky, or has dust collected around or under it, or has holes in it that show wear and tear or previous work. It can be soft or easily crumble into fine material or dust.

### Non-friable or bonded

this is in sound condition or it could be covered in paint or with boards. It may be encased behind a wall or ceiling but it is not exposed.





*Guttering and down pipes*



*Flat cement sheeting*



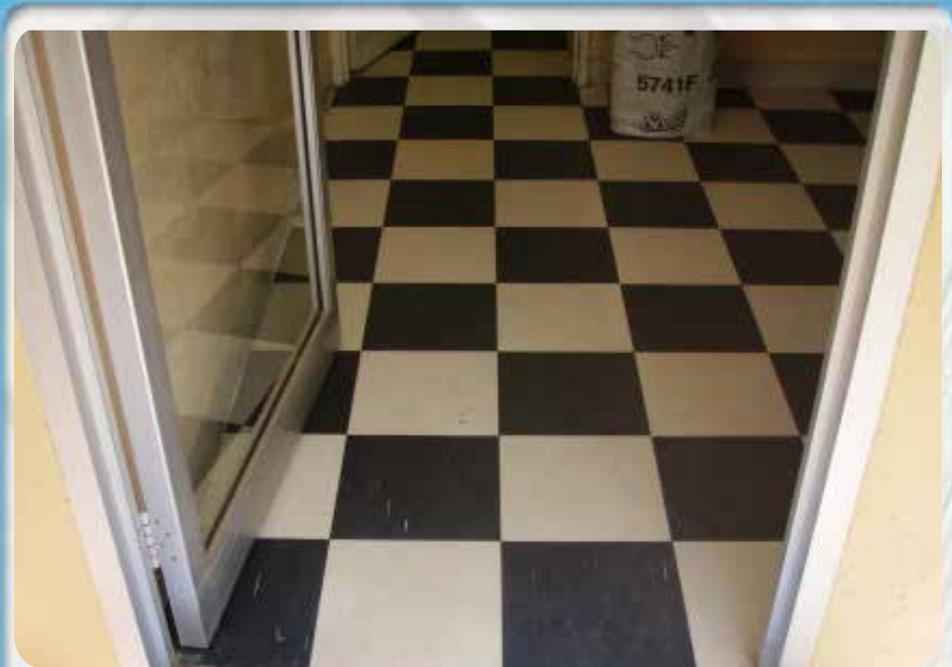
*Super 6 roofing panels*



*Planter pots*



*Super 6 corrugated sheeting - commonly used for roofing, wall cladding and fencing.*



*Vinyl floor tiles – inside the tiles and sometimes the glue used to stick them on*



*Backing board - in bathrooms and kitchens - including around taps*



*Lagging – for pipes or boilers*



*Imitation brick cladding*



*Roofing shingles*



*Fire surround insulating board & heat shields in fuses*



*The backing for sheet linoleum*



*Flexible building boards or shadowboard*



*Corrugated roofing panel and fascia / eaves*



*Corrugated roofing, fascia and gutter*

**If you think it is asbestos – what can you do?**

**THINK**

There is only one way to know for sure if something contains asbestos. A sample has to be tested.

**LEAVE IT ALONE!**

**REMEMBER**

**It will become friable if you...**

brush it!      break the cover off!      sand it!  
drill into it!      use heavy tools!

If you think you may have asbestos  
you should have it checked or...

**HAVE IT TESTED**



**Allison Laboratories Pty Ltd** has provided fibre identification services to Tasmanian businesses and individuals for over 25 years. Results are generally available within 24 – 48 hrs or within 4hrs for urgent samples.

Allison Laboratories recommends adherence to the Worksafe Code of Practice regarding taking samples for analysis. These prescribe that ‘only a competent person may take the samples for analysis because of the increased health risk of fibres being released during the process. If the sampling process is conducted incorrectly, it can be more hazardous than leaving the material alone.’

AFTF recommends that you get a licensed removalist or hygienist to take the sample for you. There is a step-by-step guide for competent people on the Allison Laboratories website (click on the blue ‘asbestos’ link on the home page) if you want to know about the procedure to follow in order to be safe from harmful fibres.

## **Cost of Testing**

**At the time of printing, the cost for testing is:**

Cement sheet, simple powder	\$75 inc. GST per sample
Vinyl, glue, mastic, window putty	\$90 inc. GST per sample
Urgent analysis surcharge	\$20 inc. GST

**Allison Laboratories can be contacted at:**

<b>Phone:</b>	03 6234 7681
<b>Email:</b>	office@allisonlabs.com.au
<b>Web:</b>	www.allisonlabs.com.au

Alternatively, call a licenced removalist who can identify asbestos and manage asbestos removal. Removalists can also prepare samples for testing.

**There are two classes of licensed removalists:**

**Class A** authorised to remove all types of asbestos and asbestos-containing materials

**Class B** authorised to remove only non-friable, or bonded, types of asbestos containing materials.

Asbestos Free Tasmania Foundation recommends Paradigm Tas, a Class A licensed removalist providing services state wide.



Paradigm Tas has over 20 years experience in the asbestos removal industry. For any company you use, please ensure it is fully licensed for the work.

**A list of licensed removalists  
can be found at  
[www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au)**





Allison Laboratories is a Tasmanian owned and operated business that has over 25 years experience in identifying asbestos fibres. We are located at 4 Warwick St, Hobart and are the only local testing provider.

**Visit our website** at [www.allisonlabs.com.au](http://www.allisonlabs.com.au)  
**Or call us** for more details 03 62 347 681



### **Asbestos Removal Specialist**

*Paradigm Tas is the specialist when it comes to asbestos removal*

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## **Who We Are**

Asbestos Free Tasmania Foundation Inc is a not for profit, registered health charity providing support, referral and information services to the Tasmanian community.

## **Our Vision**

Tasmanians to be free from the risk of exposure to asbestos and asbestos related disease.

## **Please Donate**

AFTF is a not-for-profit organisation that is administrated purely on charitable funds. Your generous contributions help fund initiatives like this one, and help to create a safer and cleaner environment for Tasmanians.

[www.asbestosfreetasmania.org.au](http://www.asbestosfreetasmania.org.au)