

Queensland flood, storm and natural disaster recovery

Asbestos – cleaning and/or removing asbestos containing materials

This information is for home owners, businesses and volunteers who are involved with the clean up and recovery of buildings damaged by the recent floods, storms and other natural disasters.

Where are asbestos materials found?

- Buildings built before 1990 may contain asbestos materials. Removal of more than 10 m² of asbestos materials must be done by a licensed asbestos removalist. You can download the [poster](#) *Common locations of material containing asbestos* from www.qld.gov.au/asbestos.
- General household debris, such as kitchen bench tops, chests, wardrobes, shelves and cabinets, are unlikely to contain asbestos and can be disposed of without any concern with general rubbish.

Things to avoid

- Avoid removing asbestos materials unless absolutely necessary. Only remove asbestos materials that are already broken and dislodged.
- Avoid breaking asbestos materials.
- Asbestos roofs must **NOT** be cleaned using high pressure water cleaners or water blasters. More information is available from www.qld.gov.au/asbestos and specifically [Cleaning asbestos cement roofs](#).
- Avoid walking on corrugated asbestos roofs as they may collapse from the weight.
- Avoid using high pressure water to clean the surface of any asbestos materials. Be aware that:
 - care must be exercised when cleaning the surface of asbestos materials so as to avoid damage and the release of asbestos fibres

- other surfaces containing asbestos materials such as walls should be cleaned using water hoses or by hand
- regularly check the surface of the material you are cleaning to ensure it is not being damaged.
- Do not use power tools or any abrasive materials (e.g. sanders) on asbestos materials.
- Do not put asbestos waste into bins or with items for kerbside collection.

In all situations

- Turn off all electricity to your work area before starting work where water may contact electrical installations.
- Make sure asbestos materials are kept damp at all times when working with them. You can use a garden hose, watering can, trigger-spray bottle or similar. No high pressure cleaners.

When cleaning asbestos materials

- Asbestos materials can be cleaned with soapy water and a cloth or sponge or light scrubbing (e.g. soft brush or broom) or with a garden hose.
- Regularly check the surface of the material you are cleaning to make sure it is not being damaged. If damage is occurring, clean more gently.

When picking up pieces of asbestos material

- If not already wet, wet the pieces with water.
- Pick up the pieces and place them into a thick plastic bag and place this bag into another bag (double bagging). Seal the bag opening with tape or a knot.
- Label the outer bag 'Caution – Asbestos'.
- Contact your local council to find out how you can dispose of the waste safely.

When planning to remove 10 m² or less of asbestos materials

- Download a copy of [Asbestos: A guide for minor renovation](#) from asbestos.qld.gov.au. This guide provides clear information on the equipment you need, how to prepare your work area, removing the asbestos materials and how to clean up.

When planning to remove more than 10 m² of asbestos materials

- You must either obtain an asbestos removal certificate or engage a licensed asbestos contractor.
- Details on how to get a certificate or engage a licensed contractor may be obtained by contacting 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

Contact us

For residents and homeowners concerned about asbestos related health issues, contact **Queensland Health** on 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) or visit www.health.qld.gov.au.

Contact your **local council** regarding the disposal of asbestos materials.

For employers and workers needing advice on making your workplace safe and healthy after the floods, contact Workplace Health and Safety Queensland on 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or visit www.asbestos.qld.gov.au.

Queensland Government information on flood recovery www.qld.gov.au/disaster or 13 QGOV (13 7468)

Queensland Government



www.asbestos.qld.gov.au



13 QGOV (13 74 68)

The material presented in this publication is distributed by the Queensland Government for information only and is subject to change without notice. The Queensland Government disclaims all responsibility and liability (including liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages and costs incurred as a result of the information being inaccurate or incomplete in any way and for any reason. © State of Queensland 2013.

Version 1 Last updated January 2013 –Health and safety during flood clean up