



ACT
Government

Asbestos Response Taskforce

Dear Homeowner

Dangerous Substances Regulation – asbestos management plans

As foreshadowed in the Asbestos Response Taskforce's report to the ACT Government in August and further in October 2014, it is possible, in most cases, to manage the ongoing asbestos exposure risks to residents and visitors (including workers) to houses contaminated by loose fill asbestos insulation in the medium term.

The new regulation made under the *Dangerous Substances Act 2004* implements requirements for the preparation of asbestos management plans and disclosure obligations where people choose to reside in affected houses.

The obligation to implement an asbestos management plan under the regulation does not apply to homeowners who are surrendering their property through the ACT Government's Buyback Program before 1 July 2016.

Asbestos management plans are a temporary and medium term approach designed to minimise future exposure risks and allow people to reside in an affected property where they choose not to follow the ACT Government's first advice which is that homeowners should leave affected properties immediately.

Homeowners are required under the regulation to have an asbestos management plan developed and submitted to WorkSafe ACT by 1 February 2016.

Asbestos management plans must be developed by a licensed asbestos assessor who will identify contamination in your house (through settled dust samples) and any points through which fibres can enter living areas such as holes, cracks or gaps in cornices. Through the management plan, the assessor will recommend actions to reduce the risk of ongoing exposure.

Homeowners must then engage a licensed asbestos removalist to undertake the recommended works outlined in the management plan which could involve cleaning, sealing, locking and/or labelling parts of the house. Any management actions must be completed within six months of the assessor's inspection.

Asbestos management plans will be required to be reviewed every two years to ensure they continue to reduce the risk of exposure to you, occupants and visitors to the house. A review will also be required in the event of building or maintenance works or structural damage that may have disturbed the asbestos contamination in the roof space, wall cavity or sub-floor of your house.

As was outlined in October 2014, the costs of preparing and implementing asbestos management plans are the responsibility of homeowners. The Taskforce has been working closely with industry to standardise approaches to the assessment and plan development process with a view to containing the cost of this work. Further detail on this work, as well as anticipated costs are in the documents attached:

- an Information Sheet; and
- a Frequently Asked Questions document.

I would also like to bring to your attention two other amendments to regulation around disclosure requirements. Homeowners who may do building or maintenance work, which may disturb loose fill asbestos in the roof space, wall cavity or sub-floor area of affected property, must advise WorkSafe ACT at least five business days before the work begins.

The regulations also oblige homeowners to tell any person who enters the house that it is a property affected by 'Mr Fluffy' asbestos. This includes tradespeople as well as service providers (e.g. health care workers) and visitors. Copies of your house's asbestos management plan must also be made available to those people.

I acknowledge this is a lot of information to consider. If you have any questions I encourage you to contact the Taskforce and speak with a member of our Personal Support Team on 13 22 81 or by email at asbestostaskforce@act.gov.au. The Taskforce's website at www.act.gov.au/asbestostaskforce also has a range of information which may further support you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Kefford', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Kefford
Head – Asbestos Response Taskforce
7 May 2015