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Do you need an Asbestos Management Plan?

The Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016 place a duty on businesses to have asbestos management plans in place for their buildings and workplaces where asbestos is likely to be found.

How do we know if there's asbestos in our workplace?

The first step is identifying any asbestos, and there are a few ways you could choose to do this:

- you could make your best guess following the WorkSafe Approved Code of Practice Guidance
- you could choose to train your staff to identify asbestos (more on that later)
- you can employ a surveyor to assess your building and produce your plan
- you could assume that your building or workplace contains asbestos, and write your plan accordingly.

Note: If your building was built prior to 1 January 2000 it is more likely to contain asbestos containing material

What is an asbestos management plan?

An asbestos management plan sets out where any identified asbestos or asbestos containing material is and how it will be managed.

An asbestos management plan must include information about:

- where your identified asbestos is located - in what wall, window etc
- how you plan to manage the asbestos risks if any exist (eg remove it, encapsulate it with a false wall or paint, leave it alone as it is in good condition, etc)



- what procedures you will follow for when work is to be undertaken that may disturb the asbestos or asbestos containing material
- how you will record incidents or emergencies involving asbestos
- a timetable for managing asbestos exposure risks (eg priorities and dates for removal, reviews, circumstances and activities that could affect the timing of action) - which should be reviewed in six months, or after an incident or emergency
- procedures, including a timetable for reviewing and (if necessary) revising the asbestos management plan and asbestos documentation (note at a minimum this MUST be every five years).

Written plan

All asbestos management plans must be in writing. They can be in hard copy or electronic form, as long as the legally required information outlined above is included.

What if we share a building?

If you share a building you still have some duties but they depend on the ability of each party to influence and control the matter – the major duty rests with the building owner.

What if we assume asbestos?

If you assume that your entire building contains asbestos, you will need to include much more stringent management actions in your plan. It will also depend on the state of the asbestos. If you have walls that are in a poor state, then your course of action will be different than if the building is in good condition.

It could be that your plan states that you will employ the services of a surveyor prior to starting any works and management actions will be defined in greater detail at that time.

You could also choose to revisit/update your plans when/if you get your staff trained and become better equipped to identify asbestos.

Do I need a surveyor to do this?

No, you can create your own asbestos management plans as long as you follow our guidance – the Approved Code of Practice: <http://construction.worksafe.govt.nz/guides/acop-management-and-removal-of-asbestos/#09-asbestos-management-plans>

You may wish to seek a surveyor to test for asbestos if you deem it necessary. The main exception is when you are doing major work that will require a refurbishment and demolition plan: <http://construction.worksafe.govt.nz/guides/acop-management-and-removal-of-asbestos/#section-22-demolition-and-refurbishment-work>

Training your staff to identify asbestos

You might wish to send some of your staff on an asbestos awareness training course, which will help them make better educated guesses as to where asbestos is within your workplaces and what state it is in. The benefit of this approach is that your asbestos management plan will be more targeted in relation to the types and locations of any asbestos.

These courses are widely provided across New Zealand and take around four hours to complete.



