

May 2019

## POLICY CLARIFICATION

# Meeting the duty to indicate the presence and location of asbestos at work

### Purpose

This policy clarification explains WorkSafe's view of the duty to indicate the presence and location of asbestos and asbestos-containing material (ACM) in the workplace. It includes situations in which asbestos and ACM are assumed to be present.

The duty is set out in section 12 of the *Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016* (the regulations). It is separate from the duties relating to the disposal of asbestos waste and contaminated personal protection equipment, which include a requirement to indicate asbestos (section 40).

You should read this policy clarification if you are a:

- person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) that manages or controls a workplace
- facilities manager
- plant manager
- commercial property manager.

### Key points

- This duty is intended to make sure everyone in the workplace who needs to know about asbestos and ACM is informed about them.
- There are many ways to indicate the presence and location of asbestos and ACM – it's up to you to decide how you'll do it.

### What does the law say?

If asbestos and ACM are identified in a workplace, you must make sure their presence and location are clearly indicated.

### What is WorkSafe's view?

Not everyone who uses the space where the asbestos and ACM are located, or assumed to be located, will need to know about it. People whose work could expose them to respirable asbestos fibres – such as a contractor drilling into a wall panel – do need to know.

Your asbestos management plan must identify whether asbestos and ACM are present or assumed to be present. It's up to you to decide how you'll indicate their presence and location to the people who need to know. You're in the best position to know what will work in your situation. There are a number of ways to indicate asbestos and ACM, including:

- in an asbestos record
- on a sign on the nearest door
- marked on a site plan
- labels (if safe to use on the surface).

Labelling all asbestos and ACM is the most direct way to inform people about them. If you are assuming asbestos is present, labelling may not be the best option. If you choose not to use labels you'll need a process to make sure people either know where to find the information or are given it before they start the work.

Whatever method you choose has to meet the duty's intent: everyone who needs the information to protect their health and safety knows where asbestos and ACM are present or assumed to be present.

### **Why we don't provide specific advice on how to indicate the presence and location of asbestos and ACM**

The regulations say the presence and location of asbestos and ACM should be indicated in a way that complies with any applicable safe work instrument. We haven't developed a safe work instrument on this topic. This is because work environments vary and one set method may not work for all. You need to choose the best method for your circumstances.