



Asbestos information for roofers

Asbestos can be found in many homes, workplaces, and buildings in Aotearoa New Zealand. Exposure to asbestos can cause serious health problems including lung cancer.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral made up of tiny fibres and used in building materials. When asbestos is disturbed or breaks down, asbestos fibres can be released into the air.

When asbestos fibres are in the air, they can be breathed in. Breathing in asbestos fibres can cause them to get trapped in your lungs, leading to serious health issues including lung cancer.

Asbestos fibres in the air are too small to be seen with the naked eye. Even if you cannot see any dust particles in the air, asbestos fibres may still be present.

What is the risk for roofers?

Every tradesperson is likely to come into contact with asbestos at work at some point. In Aotearoa, more than 200 people die each year from diseases caused by asbestos. Roofers are at risk of exposure to asbestos fibres in the air because they often work with or around materials that contain asbestos.

REMEMBER

If you are not sure if something contains asbestos, treat it like it is asbestos and stop work. Get it tested to make sure it is not asbestos before resuming work. If it is asbestos, depending on what work you have planned (such as refurbishment or demolition) it may have to be removed by an asbestos removal specialist before you can resume work. Scan the QR code to get more information.

Places where asbestos is often found



In the Bitumen below metal roofs used as a weatherproofing



Asbestos in the paper lining under bituminous coat on a roof



Super six roof
Degradation from weathering and algae
This product has reached the end of its economic life



Asbestos under the tile (as a moisture barrier)



'Decramastic' metal pressed tile
The bitumen layer is asbestos

If you find or suspect asbestos



Stop what you are doing



Do not disturb the asbestos material



Contact your supervisor, site manager, or an asbestos specialist

If you disturb asbestos



Stop what you are doing



Keep people away from the area



Leave the area



Minimise the spread of fibres



Contact your supervisor, site manager, or an asbestos specialist



Carefully remove and double bag contaminated clothing

More information

Scan the QR code for more information about asbestos.

