



**GUIDELINES 2018**

# **SCAFFOLDING & ASBESTOS**



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# Introduction

This guide is intended for scaffolding companies to help manage the risks associated with scaffolding in environments that involve asbestos. The processes and procedures in this guide could also be used as a framework for handling other harmful substances such as lead paint and silica with the appropriate controls

Further information can be found in:

- The Scaffolding in New Zealand Good Practice Guidelines
- Approved Code of Practice for the Management and Removal of Asbestos

## Health Risks

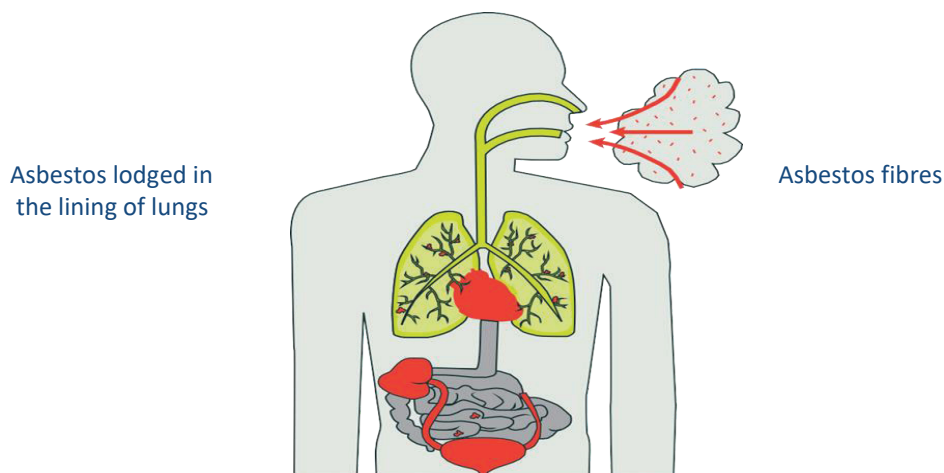
**Asbestos is the biggest workplace killer with approximately 170 people dying of asbestos related disease annually in New Zealand. Exposure to Asbestos, silica, and other harmful substances can contribute to cancers, such as lung cancer and other respiratory conditions.**

**At least 600-900 people die each year from work-related disease in New Zealand**

Fibres are breathed in; they lodge in the lungs and may cause diseases like asbestosis, lung cancer, and mesothelioma.

The health risks increase when:

- People inhale more fibres
- Exposure is more frequent
- Exposure occurs over a long period of time.



# Responsibilities

Everyone involved with work has responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. Scaffold companies, their clients and other contractors involved with the work are Persons Conducting Business or Undertaking (PCBU) and have joint responsibility to ensure their workers and others are safe. Workers on the job must ensure they keep themselves and others safe so far as reasonably practicable

## PCBU

Scaffolding companies are PCBUs and must ensure the health and safety of their workers and others. This primary duty of care includes providing and maintaining:

- A work environment without risks to health and safety
- Safe plant and structures
- Safe systems of work.

### PCBU with overlapping duties

More than one PCBU can have a duty in relation to the same matter. Where this happens the PCBUs have overlapping duties – see <https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/getting-started/understanding-the-law/overlapping-duties>.

This might happen in a:

- Shared workplace (e.g. a building site) where more than one PCBU and their workers control and influence the work on site
- Contracting chain where contractors and sub-contractors provide services to a principal contractor and client.

PCBUs must discharge their overlapping duties to the extent they have the ability to influence and control the matter and must so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, co-operate and co-ordinate with each other.

A scaffold company has additional duties as an upstream PCBU to ensure the structures it supplies are fit for purpose and do not pose risks to any PCBU using that equipment or others in the vicinity

#### **For example:**

An asbestos removal contractor engages a scaffold company to provide a scaffold for the removal of asbestos cement sheeting.

The scaffold company has a duty to ensure that they provide a scaffold and encapsulation that is fit for purpose and provides a safe work environment for the removalist and others.

The removalist has a duty to ensure that their activities do not risk the health and safety of workers of the scaffold company or others. This includes removal of any contaminated material and decontamination of scaffold and equipment.

The assessor has the duty to provide a clearance certificate upon a successful clearance inspection for the asbestos removal area and surrounds. Upon request a separate certificate should be given for any plant and equipment in the asbestos removal area. Including scaffolding to the appropriate PCBU.

## Duty to prepare asbestos management plan

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

A PCBU who manages or controls a building that is likely to have asbestos must develop an asbestos management plan. As well as owners of commercial property, residential landlords, body corporates and company share owners are PCBUs. Home occupiers are generally not PCBUs.

Where a PCBU manages or controls a building, a scaffolder should ask if there is an asbestos management plan.

## Worker Engagement

Workers often have the detailed knowledge and experience of how work is done and how it affects them. This means worker engagement, participation and representation are key pillars of any well-functioning workplace health and safety system.

PCBU must:

- Engage with their workers on matters which relate to health and safety (Including specific issues which must be engaged on.).
- Have effective, on-going ways for their workers to participate in improving health and safety in their workplace, an example on site is the daily pre-start safety talk (i.e. toolbox talk).

## Workers

Workers' responsibilities include:

- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety
- Taking reasonable care what they do (or fail to do) does not cause harm to any other person
- Following any reasonable health and safety policy or procedure of the PCBU
- Complying, with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU.
- Wear appropriate PPE in accordance with the training, information or instruction provided by the PCBU.

Workers must be engaged in the development of the safe system of work. The workers must follow the safe system of work, and if this is not possible must stop work until a new safe method of work is developed. Workers must ensure they keep themselves safe and use the PPE provided, they must also ensure they do not do anything which could harm others.

## Asbestos Training Requirement

The asbestos regulations require a PCBU to ensure that workers who may be involved in asbestos-related work are trained in the identification and suitable control measures for handling asbestos and material that may contain asbestos, such as fibre cement sheeting.

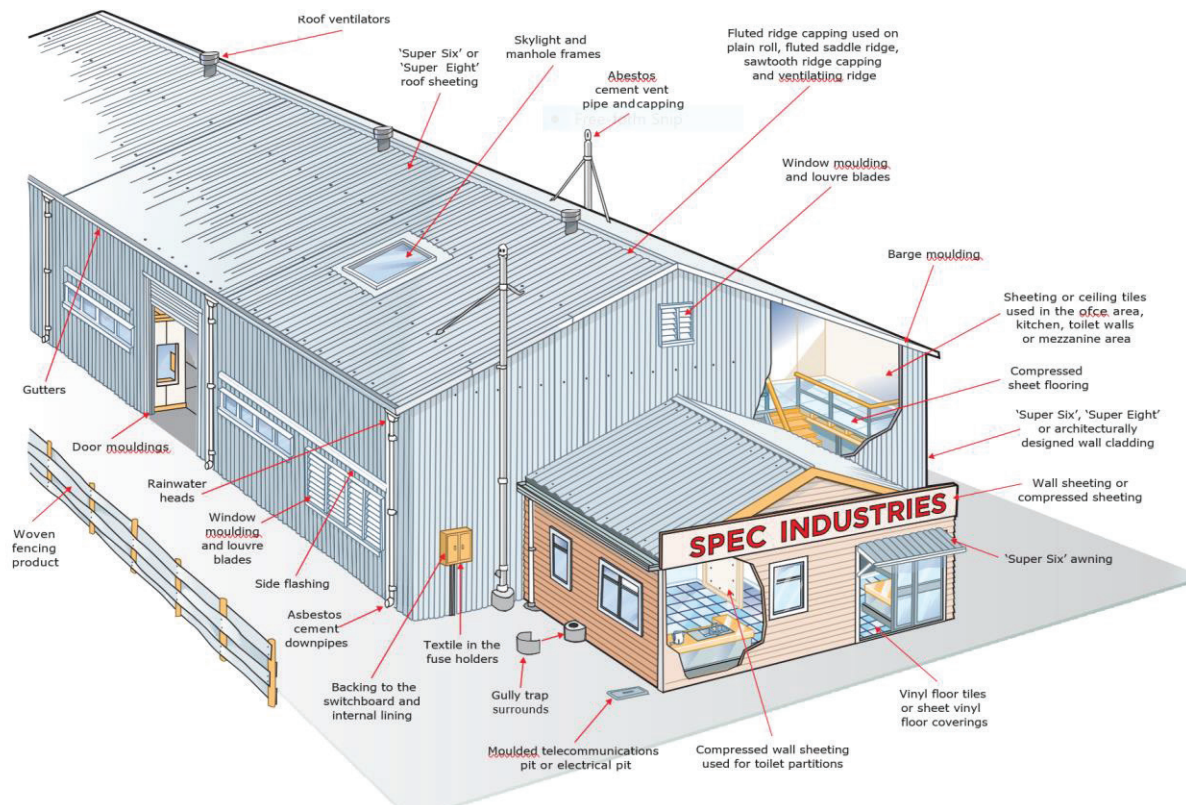
The level of training must be appropriate to the level of workers responsibility. Managers, Supervisors, Scaffolders/Leading Hands should have practical training in identification of asbestos or ACM, and suitable control measures for these. All workers must have sufficient training to comply with this document.

## Where can asbestos be found?

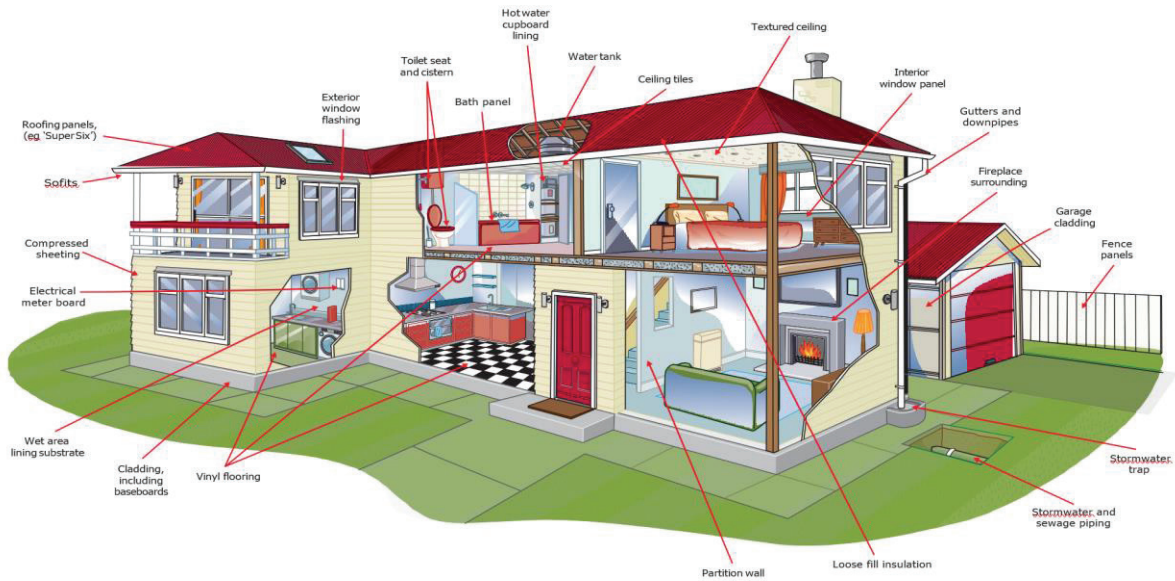
Buildings constructed before 2000 may have asbestos or asbestos-containing material (ACM). The diagrams below show areas where asbestos or ACM were commonly used.

The risk to health is low if the asbestos or ACM is in good condition and undisturbed. It is unlikely that airborne asbestos fibres will be released. It is usually safer to leave the asbestos or ACM where it is and review its condition over time.

If the asbestos or ACM deteriorates or is disturbed (e.g. during renovations or repairs) it is more likely that asbestos fibres will be released. Breathing in airborne asbestos fibres is a serious risk to health.



Commercial building constructed prior to 2000.



Residential building constructed prior to 2000

## Look out for asbestos in these locations

- *Architraves around doors and windows*
- *Asbestos cement sheeting walls*
- *Bitumen roofs*
- *Chimneys*
- *Cornices or mouldings*
- *Eaves and gables*
- *External angle mouldings (on corners)*
- *External walls (e.g. corrugated asbestos cement sheeting; artificial brick)*
- *Fireplaces*
- *Floor coverings such as carpet, tiles, lino, vinyl*
- *Insulation for hot water pipes and tanks; lagging around hot water pipes*
- *Internal and external ventilation outlets*
- *Roof capping*

## Asbestos might also be in structures outside a home or building

- *Animal hutches*
- *Carports – Extensions and lean-tos*
- *Fences*
- *Out buildings such as Garages- Sheds – Sleep-outs – Stables*
- *Gazebos and shelters*
- *Outdoor toilets and outdoor laundries*
- *Swimming pools – Water tanks*

## Industrial Plant and Installations

- *Lagging around pipes, boilers, gaskets and seals*
- *Bituminous coatings*



# Planning

All risks associated with the work must be assessed and controlled so they do not cause harm to anyone.

Site management includes ensuring there are appropriate facilities, PPE and equipment to do the work, and site-specific issues such as containment of harmful substances.

## Pre-Planning

During the scaffolding process scaffolders will be faced with a number of risks to their Health and Safety. Pre-planning should consider the possibility of asbestos on the site, and whether the scaffold is to be used for activities that may involve asbestos or harmful substances.

Pre-planning considerations include:

- What is the purpose of the scaffold?
  - The work carried out from the scaffold
  - Will the work create risks from asbestos or harmful substances
- If the scaffold is to be encapsulated or sheeted,
  - The level of containment required
  - Environmental loading on the sheeted scaffold
  - What will happen to the containment at the end?
  - And how will it be disposed of as an asbestos waste?
- Does the scaffolding create risk for workers on or around it?
- How will the site be protected from unauthorised access?
- Is pedestrian access through the site required? How will this be managed?
- Are there any other potential site specific risks?

## Onsite Risk Assessment

Implement a safe system of work before work starts. This ensures the work happens in the right location with the right plant and equipment on site and with the right workers with relevant competencies. Safe systems of work should be developed in consultation with all the PCBUs and workers involved with the work.

A Safe System of work should include:

- Engaging workers and other PCBUs
- Assigning responsibilities
- A safe work method statement
- A plan to decontaminate the scaffold equipment and encapsulation material
- Consulting a competent person regarding any temporary works design
- Identifying any health and safety hazards and risks
- Carrying out a risk assessment
- Describing how you will control any identified risks

- Describing how controls will be implemented, monitored and reviewed
- Communication systems
- Accident investigation and reporting methods
- Emergency procedures.

## Other Considerations

### Insurance

Most standard insurance policies for public liability and contractor's risk do not cover asbestos related work. The PCBU should specifically discuss the need for asbestos-related insurance with their insurer.

## Erecting the scaffolding

Before the scaffold is erected, the scaffold company must ensure their workers have all the equipment and PPE required to follow the safe system of work. The workers erecting the scaffold must understand and follow the safe system of work.

Consider whether it is safe to erect the scaffold at the site. If there is friable asbestos or other harmful material in the atmosphere, the risks must be managed before work begins

Any asbestos management plan (from the client) or asbestos removal control plan (from removalist) should be reviewed to ensure all scaffolding work is done safely before work commences.

The scaffold should be completed and handed over before any work that involves asbestos or other harmful substances begins.

If asbestos material or other harmful material is discovered while erecting a scaffold:

- Stop work immediately.
- Keep people away and isolate the area.
- Notify the client and do not resume work until advice has been provided by a competent person such as an asbestos assessor or suitably qualified health and safety consultant.
- May have to implement a decontamination procedure for workers and equipment

Ensure the workers erecting the scaffold do not disturb any asbestos containing material:

- Take care not to drill through asbestos containing material to install ties.
- Take care when walking on asbestos cement roofs. This can lead to contamination and they are also very brittle.

For example:

A scaffold is required to remove cladding which contains friable asbestos.

The cladding may be sprayed with an appropriate coating by the asbestos removalist using an Elevating Work Platform prior to the erection of scaffolding. The lower level residual risk may be managed by the scaffold workers using appropriate PPE and decontamination procedures.

## Use of the scaffolding

The scaffold user is responsible for ensuring the scaffold is used safely in accordance with the conditions on the handover certificate and that the scaffold is not altered or contaminated with asbestos or other harmful substance.

### Site access for checks and alterations

The scaffold contractor should consult with the removalist to plan for weekly and other scaffold checks, or alterations if they are required. This will require an induction, training, the use of appropriate PPE, and decontamination.

### Unforeseen contamination

Regardless of planning situations can arise where a scaffold may be contaminated as a result of work carried out on the scaffold. If this occurs:

- The user should stop work and inform the scaffold company and any PCBU with overlapping duties of the contamination.
- The PCBUs must consult to review and modify the safe system of work to appropriately manage the new risks.
- May have to implement a decontamination procedure for workers and equipment
- Isolate and keep people clear of the area, contact your Supervisor

### Decontamination prior to dismantling

If the scaffold has been used for removal of asbestos or work with harmful material, the scaffold company should obtain a clearance certificate from the user before dismantling the scaffold and removing components and other material off-site.

If the asbestos removal work hasn't been carried out by a licensed removalist, refer to unforeseen contamination.

It is the responsibility of the asbestos removalist to ensure that no scaffolding or associated material leaves the removal area unless it has been properly decontaminated.

If any material is not able to be decontaminated it must be removed from site by the removalist as per the requirements of regulation 40 to ensure no further spread of potential asbestos contamination. This can include the containment supplied with the scaffold.

Once the scaffold has been decontaminated the asbestos removalist must provide the scaffold company with a clearance certificate before the scaffold wrap is removed or the scaffold is dismantled. Any scaffold sheeting or wrap must be treated as contaminated waste

Any timber used that was not wrapped or sealed will be unable to be decontaminated. As such this will need to be disposed of as asbestos waste. If unsure, the Assessor in doing a clearance certificate should have swabbed the timber, and this should be part of the clearance certificate.

## Dismantling the scaffolding

Prior to dismantling obtain a clearance certificate and check that the scaffold is free of loose material and debris, including from trap points such as transoms and decking components.

The scaffolder should check all scaffolds for contamination by asbestos or harmful substances before dismantling begins.

If the scaffolder detects any contamination STOP work immediately and inform the removalist. Work must not recommence until contamination is removed and a new Clearance Certificate is issued.

If workers are exposed to asbestos or other harmful substance the PCBU must notify WorkSafe as a Notifiable Incident.

**NOTE:** If a scaffold is dismantled when it is known by the scaffolder to be contaminated possible consequences include:

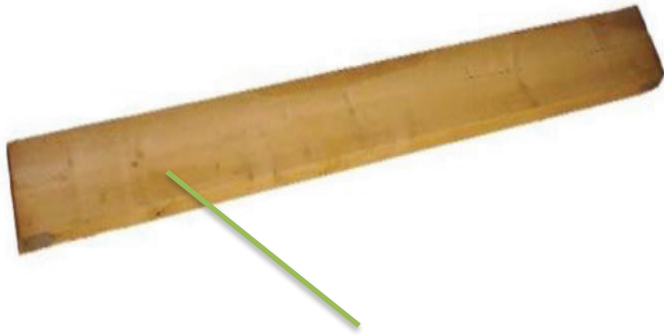
- Risk of premature death or serious harm to the scaffolders and others, such as family at home
- Commercial liability for remediation and clean-up - insurance is likely to be invalid

## Areas likely to be contaminated

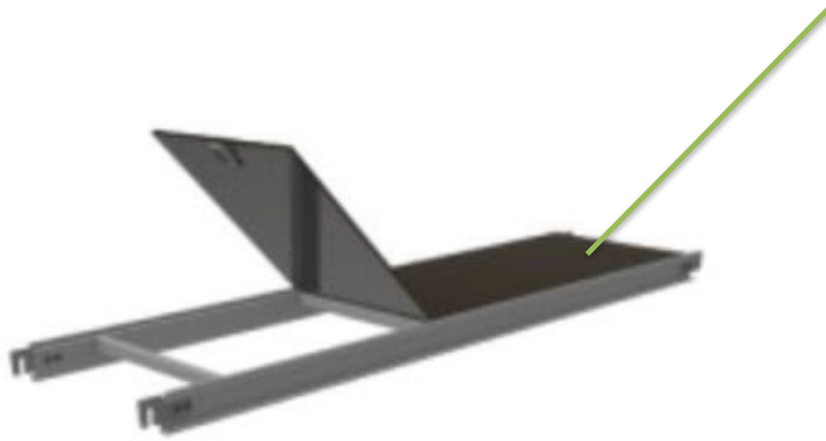
Even though the scaffold has been decontaminated and a clearance certificate has been provided, scaffold workers dismantling the scaffold must check areas where asbestos and harmful substances can be trapped in components and released during dismantling or subsequent use.



Dust and debris collects in Transoms.



Asbestos fibres can adhere to timber planks and unsealed plywood and platforms



Dust trapped in end caps



Example of lagging around a heating pipe system in a commercial building

## WorkSafe Links

The asbestos regulations can be found here:

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2016/0015/latest/DLM6729706.html>

The WorkSafe Approved Code of Practice for Management and Removal of Asbestos can be found here:

<https://worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/asbestos/management-and-removal-of-asbestos/>

WorkSafe guidance on Asbestos

<https://worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/asbestos/>

# Clearance Certificate (Sample Only)

When scaffolding has been used for asbestos removal a clearance certificate should be provided by the removalist before any wrap is removed or any scaffold is dismantled.

## Client details (either the PCBU who commissioned asbestos removal work in a workplace, or licensed asbestos removalist for work done in a home)

Name of client:

Client contact details:

## Removal work details

Date(s) that removal work was carried out: DD / MM / YEAR DD / MM / YEAR

Site address where removal work was carried out:

Details of the specific asbestos removal area(s):

Name of licensed asbestos removalist:

Name and contact details of licensed asbestos removalist supervisor(s) (if different to removalist):

## Inspection details

Date of clearance inspection: DD / MM / YEAR Time of clearance inspection: AM / PM

