



HAZARD ALERT

www.ppteu.asn.au

State Secretary Earl Setches

Phone (03) 9662 3388

Fax (03) 9663 7516

E-mail ohs@ppteu.asn.au

Asbestos contaminated mastic

Background

Recent site visits conducted by the Union after concerns were raised by our members have found that there is the potential to be exposed to ASBESTOS during refurbishment and demolition work.

One of many concerns is the presence of asbestos fibre contained in mastic. Places where you can expect to find this material are:

- Between the frames of air-conditioning ducts
- As 'gap filler' around pipework through walls
- On the external face of concrete beams and slabs we drill into. The mastic was originally used in the formwork to prevent slurry seeping from gaps, and left behind in the stripping process.

One reason to raise suspicion would be if the age of the building where the mastic is found pre-dates the 1980's.

Mastic is similar in appearance to silicone sealant and can also be visually identified by its colour; usually a dull grey/green to black, used in similar situations as you might use silicone today.

Asbestos was used as a bonding agent in the mastic and the asbestos fibres will not be easily seen.

The risk

There is an increased risk that the asbestos fibre can become airborne and inhaled when disturbed by drilling, hammering, scraping, etc. and also due to the deterioration of the mastic over the period of time.

Action to be taken

If for any reason a member has any doubts as to whether the mastic is contaminated with asbestos, the mastic must be treated as asbestos contaminated material until proven otherwise.

Your employer must have the material tested and the test results must be shown to the employee/s and/or their OH&S representative.

Whilst the "Asbestos Regulations" allow for limited amounts of asbestos to be removed by unlicensed persons, it is the policy of the Union that only licenced removalists remove asbestos. No member shall work with, handle or be involved with the removal process, regardless of the amount found.

Any potential exposure to any form of asbestos of any quantity is a health hazard.

S Rocco V2 2016

