Transcript

**Safe Work Australia**

**Asbestos – the basics for duty holders**

Presented by Brian Eva, occupational hygienist

[*Opening visual of slide with text saying ‘Brought to you by Safe Work Australia’, ‘Virtual Seminar Series’, ‘Asbestos – the basics for duty holders’, ‘seminars.swa.gov.au’*]

[The visuals during this seminar are of Brian Eva being interviewed in an outdoor environment. Occasional overlays of asbestos materials appear throughout the video.]

§ (Music Playing) §

**Brian Eva:** Asbestos is now prohibited in Australia; all forms of asbestos. However… we still encounter asbestos containing materials in things such as asbestos cement sheet, vinyl floor tiles… some asbestos containing paints, certainly fire insulation, often in switchboards, and fire doors.

Inhalation of respirable-sized asbestos fibres penetrate deep into the lungs and you can develop, over a period of 20 to 30 years, lung cancer, asbestosis, or mesothelioma.

The duty holder or the property owner has responsibility for ensuring that any asbestos containing materials within a workplace, within a building, is identified and maintained in a safe condition.

There are five important things a duty holder must do to manage asbestos within the workplace.

Step one is they must have an asbestos register, which details the type and location of asbestos containing materials within that workplace.

Step two is the requirement of the duty holder to prepare an asbestos management plan. The asbestos management plan is the way forward to manage asbestos containing materials within the workplace.

The third step that a duty holder must do is to control and manage the asbestos containing materials within the workplace. So, ideally, elimination – removal of the asbestos containing materials – is the best option.

However, this is not always practicable, and so we then follow the hierarchy, so we may encapsulate the asbestos material, we may paint it, seal the material, and then we drop down the hierarchy of control down to administrative controls, so labelling of asbestos materials, making sure the asbestos register and the plan are available to people.

Step four for the duty holder is around training and licencing. It’s really important that if you’re going to remove asbestos from a workplace you use a licenced asbestos removalist. Your work health and safety regulator can provide information and advice in regard to licencing and training.

Step five for the duty holder is to monitor the workers’ health. … Any workers who are involved in asbestos removal works or works involved in disturbing asbestos containing materials there is an obligation of the duty holder to monitor the worker’s health.

There are two model codes of practice to assist you in managing asbestos within your workplace. You can obtain these codes of practice from the Safe Work Australia website or from the local health and safety regulator in your state or territory.

If you suspect that there are asbestos containing materials within your workplace, contact your local health and safety regulator. Contact details are available from the Safe Work Australia website.

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*[Closing visual of slide with text saying ‘Find out more: Asbestos – the basics for duty holders, ‘swa.gov.au’]*

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