

Asbestos toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Asbestos.



[Download a Asbestos toolbox talk pdf](#)

Asbestos is a known human cancer-causing substance (carcinogen) of the lungs, intestines, throat, and ovaries. It is also known to cause other diseases such as Asbestosis, which can significantly reduce the amount of oxygen that can enter the bloodstream (lung function).

Why run an Asbestos Toolbox Talk?

- Prevent and minimise exposure from asbestos and asbestos containing materials, by improving awareness and training.

Asbestos Legislation:

In New Zealand, Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016 outlines the responsibilities for asbestos work, asbestos related work and declaring notifiable incidents. Most western countries have similar legislation to manage asbestos work.

How you are exposed to asbestos:

You are exposed if the asbestos or asbestos containing materials (ACM) are damaged or exposed and become airborne, and you breathe these in.

Factors affecting health risk from exposure to asbestos:

- the time your exposure lasts
- how often you're exposed
- size of the fibres

- amount of asbestos in the air
- type of Asbestos

Identifying Asbestos

There are 2 types of asbestos: friable and non-friable, there is an easy way to remember these types:

Non-friable – any material that when dry cannot be crumbled or reduced to powder and are incapable of being released into the air by hand pressure.

Friable – any material that can be crumbled or reduced to powder and released into the air by hand pressure.

Asbestos surveys – surveys and sampling of building materials by a third party such as an Asbestos, health and safety or occupational hygiene consultancy to determine if it is Asbestos or an Asbestos containing material.

If you suspect it is asbestos or an asbestos containing material, do not disturb it or damage it. Else, Asbestos fibres will get released.

Likely places to find Asbestos:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gutters and downpipes • Electrical meter boards • Ceiling tiles and textured ceilings • Fireplace surrounds • Roofing panels • Plastered surfaces and architraves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vinyl floors • Soffits • Wall and roof cladding • Lagging around waterpipes • Loose fill insulation
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How to minimise risk of exposure:

- Training on how to recognise asbestos or asbestos containing materials and assess the risk
- Get a licensed asbestos remover to remove asbestos

- If it is minor work, then ensure you are competent with asbestos work and you follow your company guidelines.
- Know how to dispose of asbestos correctly
- Ensure you know how to correctly maintain and store your respirator
- Know how to correctly don and doff your PPE and correctly dispose of it

Key takeaways:

- *Training to identify asbestos and asbestos containing materials*
- *Get licensed professionals to remove asbestos and asbestos materials*
- *Be competent and trained if the work is of minor nature on non friable asbestos*
- *Ensure you know how to correctly maintain and store your respirator*
- *Know how to don and doff your PPE*

[See all our toolbox talk topics here](#)

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