

## SAFETY ALERT

# 219 – Asbestos Related Events

### INCIDENT OVERVIEW

Throughout the business there has recently been an increase in the number of asbestos related incidents that have occurred. This has primarily consisted of asbestos containing materials being disturbed whilst undertaking building maintenance, construction and refurbishment activities.

These events have highlighted a need for more proactive measures to be implemented in order to reduce the likelihood of further occurrences of this nature. This Safety Alert aims to raise awareness of the issues that have been experienced and assist by providing practical guidance that can be implemented to minimise any potential risk.

On review of the events that have occurred, some of the common contributing factors that have led to the disturbance of asbestos containing material consist of the following:

- ▶ Lack of understanding of asbestos hazards and typical building products that may contain asbestos.
- ▶ Inadequately identifying asbestos as a potential hazard during the planning stages of the works.
- ▶ When asbestos has been identified in the planning stages, insufficiently communicating this information to all personnel involved i.e. subcontractors.
- ▶ Poor risk assessment practices.
- ▶ Failing to undertake a thorough hazardous materials investigation/survey of the site prior to works commencing in order to correctly identify the presence of asbestos in the work area.
- ▶ Failing to locate and adequately review the site asbestos register in line with the scope of works to determine if there is potential to impact known asbestos containing material.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE DIFFERENTLY TO PREVENT A SIMILAR INCIDENT FROM OCCURRING?



HOUSEKEEPING & ORDER

- ▶ Consider the presence of asbestos (hazard identification) and type of works being completed.
- ▶ Review the site based asbestos register prior to works.
- ▶ Communicate the asbestos hazards to all personnel onsite and involved in the work.
- ▶ Label asbestos hazards where appropriate.



POSITIONS OF PEOPLE

- ▶ Where known asbestos works is taking place, ensure there is sufficient segregation/isolation between works occurring and others onsite.
- ▶ Where asbestos has been identified, only trained and competent personnel are to manage these works.



PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- ▶ Where it is identified that asbestos works are required, trained and competent personnel are to ensure appropriate PPE is worn to minimise potential exposure risk. i.e. mask, coveralls, eye protection, gloves etc.



RULES & PROCEDURES

- ▶ Complete a thorough risk assessment process (JSEA/SWMS), considering the asbestos risks and necessary controls to be implemented prior to works.
- ▶ If conducting destructive or invasive works, further investigation/survey of the potential for asbestos is required.
- ▶ If there is a change to the work scope, this is to be acknowledged and processes/controls updated and communicated.



TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

- ▶ Where asbestos works are deemed to be required, preference to be given to using hand tools to minimise potential asbestos disturbance.
- ▶ Do not use high powered/ high speed tools on asbestos products.

For more information regarding this incident please contact:

<b>HSE Representative:</b>	Dan Hunt
<b>Contact Number:</b>	0408 277 431
<b>Date of Issue:</b>	13/03/2020

## Report all incidents and near misses

Please display on Safety Noticeboards and raise this matter at the next Toolbox Talk or Safety Meeting.