

Work Safe  
TASMANIA



# GETTING *a* RESIDENTIAL ASBESTOS SURVEY:

## ***Information for home owners and renovators***

If your house was built or renovated before 1990, it's likely that it will contain some form of asbestos containing material. If you're unsure whether your home contains asbestos, an asbestos survey will help you learn its location and condition, and give guidance on how to manage the risk.



### ***What is an asbestos survey?***

A licensed asbestos assessor conducts an audit of your property to identify asbestos containing material; then provides you with a report making recommendations on removal or management strategies.

### ***When should I get an asbestos survey done?***

If you're planning home renovations, an asbestos survey will help to identify asbestos that needs to be managed or removed as part of your renovations.

It's important that a survey be conducted *before* you start work to avoid disturbing any asbestos containing material.

You may also consider getting an asbestos survey done before you purchase a property (it's not mandatory for building inspection reports to identify asbestos, nor for a seller to tell you if the house contains asbestos). Asbestos in poor condition will need to be removed or managed, and the cost of this might be something you need to consider.

### ***Where do I find someone to carry out the survey?***

To find a licensed asbestos assessor in Tasmania, go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'asbestos assessor search'.

### ***The assessor wants to take samples and have these analysed. Do I need this?***

The only way to confirm that a substance or material contains asbestos is to have it tested in a laboratory. All testing must be done by a laboratory that's been accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities ([www.nata.com.au](http://www.nata.com.au)).

Sampling involves the careful removal of a small section of suspected material to be sent to a laboratory for testing. Depending on their experience, some asbestos assessors may offer a visual identification service that does not involve taking samples for testing. It's important to know that without testing, you can only *assume* the material is or is not asbestos.

If in doubt, treat the material as if it contains asbestos until it has been confirmed otherwise.



### ***Can I take the samples myself?***

When taking a sample, care needs to be taken so fibre disturbance is kept to a minimum. The asbestos assessor will usually take these samples for you and manage the testing process.

However, if you wish to do it yourself, please read and consider the detailed information at [www.asbestossafety.gov.au/asbestos-sampling-process](http://www.asbestossafety.gov.au/asbestos-sampling-process). You should have everything ready before you start the process, and take all the precautions outlined so you don't expose yourself or others to asbestos fibres.

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### ***What should the report I receive include?***

The licensed asbestos assessor should provide you with a report that includes:

- /// details of the person conducting the survey
- /// the location and a description of materials that contain/are suspected to contain asbestos, including photos
- /// laboratory testing results, if sampling is done
- /// recommended action items (management strategies or removal).

### ***Once I have the report, what should I do with it?***

Carefully read the report and any recommendations made by the licensed asbestos assessor.

If you are unsure about any aspects of the report, ask the person who prepared it for further advice or explanation.

You should also provide a copy of the report to any tradesperson who intends to carry out work on your home, so they're aware of the presence of asbestos in your property.



## ***Managing the asbestos***

If asbestos is in good condition and unlikely to be disturbed, it can be left in place and monitored over time.

If the asbestos is subject to minor damage or weathering, the report from the licensed asbestos assessor may indicate that it be repaired or sealed as a measure to prolong its life and manage the risk until removal becomes necessary.

It's important that you regularly inspect the material for any changes to its condition.

For information on how to safely manage asbestos, see the code of practice *How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace*. Go to [www.worksafe.ta.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.ta.gov.au) and search for 'codes 2016'.

While the code is mainly designed to help workplaces, its practical advice can also be applied to managing asbestos risks in homes.

## ***Removing the asbestos***

If asbestos is in poor condition or is likely to be damaged or disturbed during renovations, it should be removed. Removal requirements depend on the type and amount of asbestos containing material present.

To find a licensed asbestos removalist in Tasmania, go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'asbestos removalist search'.