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**Helping
Queenslanders
Build Better**

fact: n. 1. an event or thing known to have
app. d. ex. 2. a truth or reality
sp. in. or observ. 3. a piece of
information. get me all the facts of this case.

FACT SHEET

ASBESTOS REMOVAL

The Building Services Authority (BSA) has developed this Fact Sheet to inform consumers on issues related to asbestos. Asbestos presents a health hazard if fibres of a respirable size become airborne and are then inhaled. Possible health effects include lung cancer, asbestosis (lung scarring that impairs breathing), mesothelioma (lung cancer), and benign plural diseases (disease affecting lung linings).

Any tradesperson or other worker who is required to remove asbestos materials needs to know how to do it safely. This fact sheet contains basic information only. Please contact Workplace Health and Safety before working with asbestos (see contact details overleaf).

Types of asbestos

There are two main types of materials containing asbestos that are used in building: friable (loose) asbestos; and bonded (non-friable) asbestos.

Friable (loose) asbestos

Friable asbestos refers to any asbestos-containing material that when dry, can be easily crumbled by hand. Common examples of friable asbestos are acoustic ceilings and tiles, many types of plasters, wallboard, sprayed asbestos insulation, and pipe and boiler insulation. Use of asbestos in these products was banned in the 1980s, but some may still have been used in later construction. Sweeping, dusting or using a household vacuum will make these fibres airborne. This type of asbestos can **only** be removed by a person holding an 'A Class' licence (see below).

Bonded (non-friable) asbestos

Bonded asbestos contains a binder or hardening agent such as cement, asphalt or vinyl and is difficult to damage by hand. Common examples of bonded asbestos are asphalt roofing shingles, vinyl asbestos floor tiles, asbestos-cement sheets (fibro), and electrical switchboards.

Licences required to remove asbestos

The removal of asbestos is licensed by Workplace Health and Safety (WHS). A person removing more than 10m² of asbestos must have an 'A Class' or 'B Class' WHS licence.

- 'A' Class Licence** – is required to remove **loose** (friable) asbestos. 'A' class licence holders do not require a 'B' class licence.
- 'B' Class Licence** – is required to remove 10m² or more of **bonded** asbestos.
- Removing less than 10m² does not require a licence, BUT safety precautions are essential. Consult with WHS before attempting to remove asbestos.

Often there is building work associated with asbestos removal (for example, replacement of a ceiling, roof etc). Building work valued at more than \$3,300 must be performed by a BSA-licensed contractor.

Environmental Tips

- Play it safe with asbestos.
- Don't** store or reuse any asbestos materials you have removed.
- Don't** dispose of asbestos waste in a normal rubbish bin or skip or during council bulk waste collections.
- Don't** dump asbestos waste in the environment. Fines apply.

Useful Contacts

Building Services Authority	Phone: 1300 272 272 Web: www.bsa.qld.gov.au
Workplace Health and Safety	Phone: 1300 744 636 / 1300 369 915 Web: www.health.qld.gov.au / www.whs.qld.gov.au
Asbestos Industry Association	Phone: 07 3870 5561 Web: www.asbestosindustry.asn.au
National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA)	Phone: 07 3870 3844 Web: www.nata.asn.au
Asbestos & You	Web: www.asbestosandyou.com.au

Further Information

For further information on working with asbestos, contact Workplace Health and Safety using the contact details above. If you require information about licensing for associated building work, contact BSA on 1300 272 272 or visit www.bsa.qld.gov.au.