**Asbestos in Schools**

**July 2013**

**Issue:**

* All government schools and portable classrooms constructed in Victoria up until the mid-1980s must be assumed to have Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM). Asbestos was subsequently banned in building and material products in Australia towards the end of 2003.
* Asbestos Containing Materials were used because of their strength, durability, insulation properties, and resistance to fire, electrical and chemical damage.
* Asbestos Containing Materials are divided into **friable** (able to be crushed, crumbled or reduced to powder by applying hand pressure which then releases fibres into the air) and **non-friable** (also known as bonded ACM, is a material that contains a bonding compound, e.g. cement, which has been reinforced with asbestos fibres).
* The majority of friable ACM has been removed from Victorian government schools however, may still be found in:
* Insulation on boilers
* Water Heaters
* Pipe lagging/insulation
* Rope linings in safes, incubator and hot plates
* Examples of non-friable ACM in schools include:
* Asbestos cement sheeting on walls (internal and external), ceilings, eaves and toilet partitions
* Joining or adhesive compounds used on wall joints and masonry wall tiles
* Electrical switchboards, insulators and fittings
* Some vinyl floor tiles and the backing of vinyl sheet flooring and adhesives
* Textiles (rope seals, woven cloth, blankets)
* Heat mats and rope lining in incubator and hot plates in science labs
* Gaskets

**Factors/Risks to Consider:**

* Asbestos Containing Materials that are intact and in good condition are not hazardous to building occupants under normal conditions.
* Asbestos becomes a health risk when fibres are released into the air and inhaled. The length and frequency of exposure may impact the risk of developing asbestos-related diseases such as asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer.

**Actions Required:**

It is a requirement that all government schools manage identified ACM on site and implement the following processes:

* Nominate a trained Asbestos Co-ordinator who will act as the main liaison and contact person for all asbestos-related issues.
* Include asbestos in the [OHS Risk Register](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/ohsriskregister.xls) and ensure appropriate controls are implemented and reviewed regularly.
* Develop an Asbestos Management Plan using the DEECD [Asbestos Management Plan template](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/asbestosmgtplan.docx).
* Schedule visual inspections of ACM in the [OHS Activities Calendar](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/ohsactivitiescalendar.xlsx) and conduct these every 3 months as per the school’s Division 5 Asbestos Audit Report.
* Record any changes to the condition of ACM in the school’s Division 5 Audit Report and contact **DTZ** on **1300 133 468** for advice if required.
* Provide an [OHS Induction](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/contractorinductchecklist.docx) to all contractors to ensure safe work requirements when handling asbestos are discussed and understood prior to commencing any work.
* Provide a copy of the Division 5 and/or Division 6 Asbestos Audit Report and current Asbestos Management Plan to contractor prior to commencing any work.
* All asbestos related incidents must be recorded in [eduSafe](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/EDUSAFE/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fedusafe%2fDefault.aspx).

**Further Information:**

Further information can be obtained from DEECD’s [Health, Safety and WorkSafe](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/governance/Pages/healthworksafe.aspx) website or by contacting the DEECD OHS Advisory Service on **1300 074 715** or email**safety@edumail.vic.gov.au** **.**