

## JOINT SOP

<b>Title</b>	Managing potential asbestos exposure
<b>Purpose</b>	To outline the process undertaken by Control Agencies for risk management and communications during Major Emergencies where there is a possible or confirmed risk of asbestos exposure.
<b>Scope</b>	<p>This Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) applies to the communication between agencies, incident responders and external agencies (e.g. Council workers, contractors, members of the public) during a Major Emergency.</p> <p>This JSOP does not include policies and procedures that agencies may put in place regarding minimum Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment (PPC&amp;E) standards, testing processes, and methods of storage, transport, decontamination, and disposal of contaminated PPC&amp;E and equipment.</p>
<b>Applicable Agencies</b>	<p>This procedure applies to the following agency personnel;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFA</li> <li>• DELWP (FFMVic)</li> <li>• MFB</li> <li>• VICSES</li> <li>• Any volunteer, contractor or responder for which the Control Agency is responsible.</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<p>The procedural contents of this JSOP are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 1: Identification</li> <li>• Step 2: Notification</li> <li>• Step 3: Manage Site</li> <li>• Step 4: Decontamination</li> <li>• Step 5: Exposure</li> <li>• Step 6: Recording Incident</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<p>All emergency service personnel involved in emergency operations, and all others entering an incident ground are responsible for managing potential asbestos exposure.</p> <p>Specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incident Controllers are required to ensure areas with potential for asbestos exposure are identified during the development of the Incident Action Plan, particularly in relation to deployment orders, briefing and safety messaging.</li> <li>2. Incident Controllers are to ensure that crews and all persons on site are briefed and provided information and/or maps at commencement of each shift on locations of known or</li> </ol>

**S  
O  
P**

**J08.04**

	<p>suspected asbestos containing material (ACM).</p> <p>3. Incident Controllers are to ensure that mitigation controls are in place and ongoing monitoring is undertaken where damaged or friable asbestos and/or airborne asbestos fibres are known or suspected.</p> <p>4. Incident Controllers are to ensure all information regarding known or suspected ACM to oncoming Control Agencies, Private Contractors and those members of the Community who may be impacted by the event is communicated appropriately.</p>
<b>Definitions</b>	<p>The following definitions apply to this procedure:</p> <p><b>Asbestos containing materials (ACM)</b> Any manufactured material or object that, as part of its design, contains one or more of the mineral silicates. ACMs were widely used in buildings, structures, vehicles and plant, due to its durability, fire resistance, insulating properties and low production cost up until the late 1980s.</p> <p><b>Friable asbestos</b> Asbestos which, either in its current state or as a result of a work process, can be pulverised or reduced to powder by hand pressure.</p> <p><b>PPC&amp;E</b> Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment.</p>

## PROCEDURE

### 1. Identification

- 1.1. Ensure safety of all personnel on site at all times.
- 1.2. Determine potential for the presence of Asbestos Containing Material (ACM). (Refer to Schedule 1 for potential ACM locations). *Pay particular attention to damaged or suspected friable asbestos.*
- 1.3. Where ACMs are suspected but not confirmed, assume asbestos is present until proven otherwise.
- 1.4. Notify all persons on scene of potential for the presence and location of ACM.
- 1.5. The Incident Controller should consider the appointment of a Field Safety Officer to help manage personnel safety appropriate minimum PPC & E requirements on site.
- 1.6. Restrict entry into immediate area to authorised and equipped personnel wearing appropriate PPC&E.

**NOTE:** Minimum PPC&E may vary depending on the Control Agency and includes personal protective clothing and correctly fitted respiratory protective equipment, such as a P2 particulate respirator or agency-specific breathing apparatus as a minimum. (Refer to own agency procedures and note Standard AS/NZS 1716:2012)

## 2. Notification

- 2.1. Notify the IC of the potential or actual presence and location of ACM.
- 2.2. The IC will ensure all personnel are informed of possible ACM locations, minimum PPC&E requirements (including respiratory protection) and restrict access to potentially contaminated areas. Notification to extend to any future personnel to arrive onsite.
- 2.3. The IC shall ensure the Incident Management Team (IMT), Emergency Management Team (EMT) and Regional Controller is informed of potential ACM and measures in place to mitigate exposure.
- 2.4. The IC should also consider notifying relevant external agencies, which may include but are not limited to:
  - Municipal Building Surveyor (refer Uninhabitable Buildings Protocol);
  - EPA
  - Other relevant agencies (as specified in EMV JSOP 08.01 and own agency procedures).
- 2.5. The IC will ensure that Incident Action Plans (IAP), maps and briefing materials reflect the potential ACM hazard and risks. This includes any handover communications and transition to recovery documentation.

## 3. Manage Site

The IC will ensure the extent of potential exposure to asbestos is determined and any additional support required to inform decision making.

- 3.1. Minimise potential exposure to ACM and asbestos fibres. Cordon off area using barrier / warning tape and erect warning signage to restrict further entry into area by unauthorised personnel.
- 3.2. Avoid further disturbance of asbestos containing materials. Where practicable, wet down materials with water and maintain dampness. *Do not use high pressure water jet streams, as this may disturb fibres.*
- 3.3. Minimise risk of fibres becoming airborne, managing personnel and onsite activities accordingly.
- 3.4. Monitor local conditions for changes which may increase the risk of fibres becoming airborne (e.g. increased airflow or winds). Maintain regular risk assessments.

## 4. Decontamination

- 4.1. The IC will ensure arrangements are in place for decontamination in instances of suspected ACM contamination having regard to agency procedures.
- 4.2. All personnel potentially exposed to ACM or asbestos fibres will need to be decontaminated prior to leaving the site. Any equipment, vehicles and plant suspected of contamination should also be decontaminated. The IC will ensure the appropriate procedures are determined in consultation with agencies operating on site.

- 4.3. The IC will ensure onsite decontamination location is determined, upwind of ACM, away from vehicles and with minimum potential for water run-off.
- 4.4. The IC will ensure arrangements are in place for access to sufficient equipment at decontamination site to meet likely requirements.
- 4.5. All potentially contaminated PPC&E is required to be bagged and labelled separately and placed in a secure area.
- 4.6. Finalise decontamination:
- 4.6.1. The IC will ensure arrangements are in place for test sample to be analysed by an approved testing laboratory or Occupational Hygiene & Environment Consultant. Test sample should include a sample of bagged clothing.
- 4.6.2. Results of test to be communicated to each agency/individual potentially exposed by the IC or other person appointed by the RC at the earliest possible time.
- 4.6.3. Transfer and recovery of potentially contaminated PPC&E will be as per agency procedures. Where no agency procedures exist, the IC shall determine appropriate procedures.
5. Handover / Communication
- 5.1 If transfer of control occurs from one control agency to another, or from a control agency to a private contractor, the IC is to ensure that all information regarding known or suspected ACM is communicated to oncoming Control Agencies, Private Contractors and those members of the Community who may be impacted by the event.
- 5.2 Details of the date, time and names of Private Contractors and/or members of the community involved in this handover is to be noted in the record of the incident.
- 5.3 At incidents where there are persons that may require transport to hospital for treatment or assessment, the IC should ensure the early determination of the potential for the presence of ACM, early decontamination of affected patients and the early provision of safety and PPE advice to ambulance paramedics.
6. Exposure
- 6.1. The IC, or RC where incident concluded, will determine the extent of potential exposure to asbestos by:
- 6.1.1. Obtaining a copy of the Test Analysis Report.
- 6.1.2. Sharing findings and recommendations with involved agencies, in accordance with agency procedures.
- 6.2. Agencies are required to notify individuals of post-exposure analysis outcomes and take required action:
- 6.2.1. Communicate investigation outcomes to relevant and appropriate agencies and staff.
- 6.2.2. Ensure Incident Action Plan, briefings and maps are updated accordingly and include details of required actions, where specified.

6.2.3. Offer a voluntary baseline health assessment to affected personnel following the incident involving exposure in accordance with own agency procedures.

6.3. Where evidence of contamination has been found:

6.3.1. All clothing and equipment will be sent to an approved and licensed commercial laundry to be decontaminated (as per own agency procedures, in alignment with Australian Standards).

6.3.2. All affected personnel, attending agencies and relevant authorities will be notified, as per own agency procedures.

6.3.3. Site owner / occupier will be advised that ACM identified at the site is to be removed by a 'Class A' registered asbestos removalist.

6.4. Where **no contamination has been found**, clothing and equipment will be cleaned and recommissioned in accordance with individual agency procedures.

6.4.1. All affected personnel, attending agencies and relevant authorities will be notified, as per own agency procedures.

7. Recording incident

7.1. The IC will ensure comprehensive recording of incident, including preparation of a detailed safety incident report, logged in accordance with own agency procedures and ensuring the following information:

- Name, agency and related details of all personnel who may have been exposed
- Location and condition of the suspected ACM, including a map
- Roles and tasks performed by each individual and approximate location in relation to the suspect ACM
- Dates and estimated times of exposure for each individual
- Date, time and other related details of information handover to Private Contractors or members of the Community impacted by the incident.
- Actions taken to prevent further exposure including respiratory protection used by personnel, taping off and signage of area, details of any testing arrangements put in place etc.

## SAFETY

Emergency Personnel need to ensure that the protection and preservation of life is maintained at all times.

In the application of this JSOP there the following safety considerations apply:

- Nil

## REFERENCE

<b>Related Documents</b>	<p>Noel Arnold and Associates (2006). Report on the Investigation of the Effect of Fire on Asbestos Fibre Contamination</p> <p>WorkSafe Victoria (2009). <a href="#">Fact Sheet 2: Exposure to asbestos from bushfire affected areas</a></p> <p>WorkSafe Victoria (2016). <a href="#">Information about fire damaged non-friable asbestos containing material</a></p> <p><a href="#">EMV (2017). Uninhabitable Buildings Protocol</a></p> <p><a href="#">EMV JSOP 08.01 OH&amp;S Incident Reporting &amp; Investigation</a></p> <p><a href="#">EMV JSOP 08.02 Dynamic Risk Assessment</a></p>
<b>Environment</b>	<p>EPA (2017). <a href="#">Industrial Waste Resource Guideline – Asbestos transport and disposal</a></p>

## REVIEW

<b>Date Issue</b>	9 September 2019
<b>Date Effective</b>	9 October 2019
<b>Date to be Reviewed</b>	September 2022
<b>Date to Cease</b>	

**S  
O  
P**

**J08.04**

## AUTHORITY

The Emergency Management Commissioner has issued this SOP under section 50 of the Emergency Management Act 2013.

<b>Approved</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Andrew Crisp Emergency Management Commissioner		
<b>Endorsed</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Steve Warrington Chief Officer, CFA		
Chris Hardman Chief Fire Officer, DELWP		
Greg Leach Chief Officer, MFB		
Alistair Drayton Acting Chief Officer Operations, VICSES		

# Schedule 1

## Potential Asbestos Locations

Asbestos products may be found when attending incidents:

- Amongst dumped rubbish; and/or
- Involving vehicles, processing plant and equipment dating pre-1970s; and/or
- Involving dwellings and structures constructed prior to 1990s

S  
O  
P

J08.04

Common building and structural locations include:

**Roof, downpipes, guttering and eaves:**

Lining under the eaves  
Loose roof insulation  
Rainwater heads  
Ridge tiles  
Roof sheeting

**Living and general purpose rooms:**

Cement sheet walls & ceilings  
Heating flue  
Loose asbestos in the ceiling cavity

**Kitchen:**

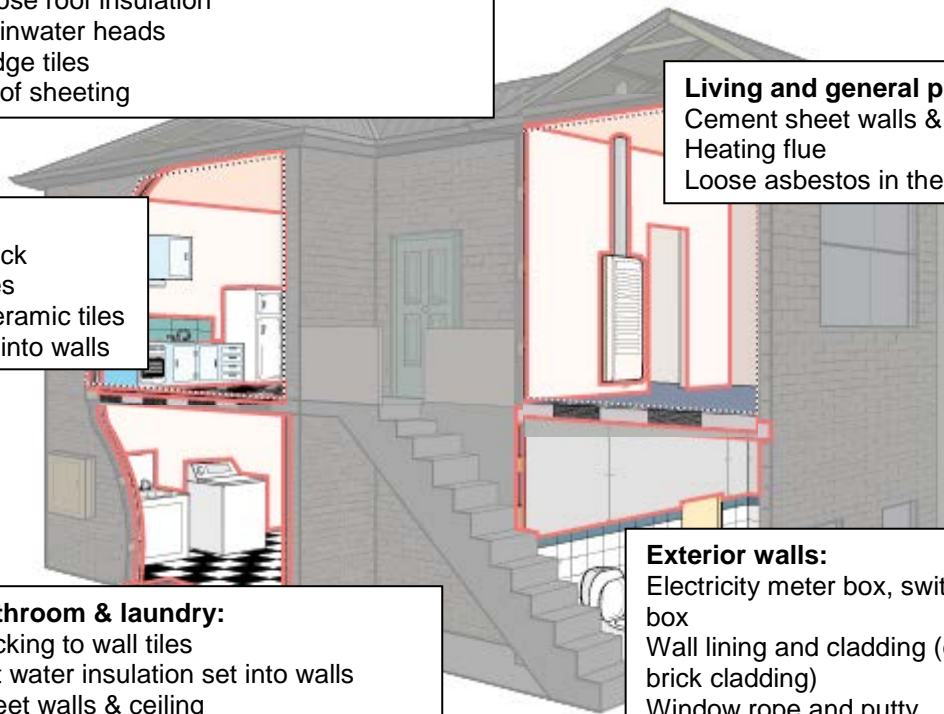
Walls, floors & splashback  
Backing of vinyl floor tiles  
Underlay sheeting for ceramic tiles  
Hot water insulation set into walls

**Bathroom & laundry:**

Backing to wall tiles  
Hot water insulation set into walls  
Sheet walls & ceiling  
Backing of vinyl floor tiles

**Exterior walls:**

Electricity meter box, switchboard & fuse box  
Wall lining and cladding (e.g. imitation brick cladding)  
Window rope and putty



Other possible locations:

- Plant and vehicles – gaskets and seals, brake linings and disc pads
- Outside – Asbestos in soil, wall and imitation brick cladding in shed, kennel and garage, fencing, loose asbestos cladding
- Other – Fire doors with asbestos core, telecommunication pits, building waste and dumped rubbish

