

Environmental Guidance Note – Naturally Occurring Asbestos

HSE DOCUMENT

Asbestos is found as a naturally occurring mineral in many areas of NSW and may occur in veins within rock formations.

Naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) is generally found when soil is disturbed and when undertaking excavation/earthworks activities.

Clauses 431 – 434 of the WHS Regulation provides that the person with management or control of a workplace must manage the risks associated with NOA at the workplace.

NOA mapping provided in TSS or GSA indicates potential for occurrence within 10 metres of the natural ground surface.

Where this has been identified as a potential risk, an evaluation of the work practices must be undertaken to determine the likelihood of potential interaction.

Contact your HSE or E Business Partner for further guidance.

General Information

Any potential disturbance of any NOA identified or assumed present at a workplace must be included in an asbestos management plan (AMP) which must be prepared by the person with management or control of the workplace or site. The AMP must:

- Identify the location of the naturally occurring asbestos
- Include decisions, and reasons for decisions, about the management of asbestos at the workplace for example safe work procedures and control measures
- Outline procedures for incidents and emergencies involving asbestos, including who is responsible
- Be maintained with up-to-date information
- Be reviewed at least every five years or when any changes are made at the workplace
- Be accessible to any worker or the PCBU who has carried out or intends to carry out work at the workplace and any health and safety representatives who represent workers at the workplace
- Provide information, consultation and training responsibilities to workers carrying out work involving asbestos.

You do not need a licence to work with naturally occurring asbestos, however all workers must be trained in the hazards and risks associated with working where naturally occurring asbestos is found. For ongoing management of NOA an air monitoring program may be required.

When undertaking excavation in NOA risk areas	Identifying NOA
<p>A NOA Management Plan may be required. Contact HSE for advice.</p>	<p>TSS contains up to date NOA risk area mapping. There are 3 main areas known for NOA:</p>
<p>Isolate the workplace, or the part of the workplace NOA has been identified or assumed until controls are in place or redirect excavation away from the NOA area</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Great Serpentine Belt (near Barraba), 2. The Gordonbrook Serpentine (Belt near Baryulgil), and 3. The Coolac Serpentine Belt (near Gundagai).
<p>Using sealed excavation or equipment – e.g. air-conditioned cabins with filtered air (HEPA Filter)</p>	<p>Minor quantities of NOA have been found in metamorphosed rocks and limestone near Orange, Rockley Newbridge, Wellington and Broken Hill.</p>
<p>Ensuring a competent person maintains regular surveillance of the naturally occurring asbestos to ensure minimal disturbance</p>	<p>Mapping illustrates risk areas, however, verification in the field is recommended.</p>
<p>Developing procedures for the safe disposal of asbestos waste</p>	
<p>Educating workers in safe work practices including decontamination and wash down procedures for vehicles leaving the naturally occurring asbestos area</p>	
<p>Consider air monitoring while working in NOA areas</p>	
<p>Airborne asbestos must be eliminated or, if that is not reasonably practicable, exposure must be minimised to below the occupational exposure level by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing workers with information and training • using HEPA filters in all work vehicles/plant • using appropriate PPE • wetting surfaces to reduce the dust levels • using wet drilling or other approved in-hole dust suppression • using wash down facilities to prevent the spread of dust/contamination 	<p>NOA is often found in Serpentine rocks (it is often green in colour)</p>