

FACT SHEET

CHOOSING AN ASBESTOS CONSULTANT

Introduction

The NSW *OHS Regulation 2001* requires demolition work, including removal of asbestos containing material, to comply with National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC) code of practice and guidance material on asbestos and Australian Standard 2601 – Demolition of structures. The Regulation requires a Hazardous Substances Management Plan (HSMP) to be developed by a competent person before commencing work.

When preparing the HSMP, a site audit should be carried out to identify the location, extent, accessibility, type and condition of hazardous substances, such as asbestos. The HSMP must include the location and quantity of each substance, the method of control or removal, the methods of monitoring exposure and the procedures for handling, storing and disposing the substance. The HSMP also must also satisfy the requirements in Chapters 6 and 8 of the *OHS Regulation 2001* on the management of Hazardous Substances and asbestos/demolition work. It must be stressed that the site audit report is not used as a HSMP as it requires additional information such as risk assessment, training, consultation, risk control measures and documented safe working practices and procedures.

An occupational hygienist or asbestos consultant is normally engaged to conduct the site audit and prepare the HSMP. He/she may also carry out clearance inspections at the end of the demolition or substances removal work.

Ideally the asbestos consultant/occupational hygienist should be employed independently of the demolition or asbestos removal contractor to make sure that there is no perception of conflict of interest.

How do you choose a competent person?

The competent person should have a solid background in:

- *OHS Regulation 2001* and associated codes of practice and standards
- Occupational health and safety or occupational hygiene
- Building architecture and construction
- Knowledge of historical use and locations of asbestos
- Mechanical system layout and operation
- Abatement options and techniques at removal sites
- Air sample testing* and interpretation of results
- Asbestos clearance criteria** and the epidemiology of asbestos-related diseases

* Sample testing must be conducted by a NATA registered laboratory.

** The understanding of the clearance criteria as described in the NOHSC code and NOHSC Guidance Note on the Membrane Filter Method for Estimating Airborne Asbestos Dust and the interpretation of results.

It is important that the consultant has demonstrated project management experience if he/she is required to supervise the asbestos removal work.

Where do we find such persons?

Check with employer and employee associations and other industry or professional associations such as ARCA (Asbestos Removal Contractors Association - contact the ARCA Secretary on (02) 8586 3521) and AIOH (Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists - contact (03) 9335 2577 or www.aioh.org.au).



Catalogue No. **4547**

WorkCover NSW 92 - 100 Donnison St Gosford NSW 2250

Locked Bag 2906 Lisarow NSW 2252 WorkCover Assistance Service **13 10 50**

Website www.workcover.nsw.gov.au