

Contractors and Asbestos Quick Reference Guide

- **Purpose and Scope**

Asbestos could be hidden in any building built or refurbished before the year 2004. Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral rock made up of strong fibres that have fire, heat and chemical resistant properties. While asbestos is now banned from use, it was a component of thousands of different products used in the community and industry from the 1940s until the late 1980s. Some uses of chrysotile asbestos products, mainly friction materials and gaskets continued until 31 December 2003.

- **Why is it dangerous?**

Asbestos is made up of thin fibres. These can break down into much smaller and thinner fibres. The smallest fibres cannot be seen with the naked eye but they can be breathed in.

Asbestos fibres are only dangerous if they are made airborne and inhaled.

The fibres that are breathed in can become stuck in the lungs and damage them. This can cause scars that stop the lungs working properly (asbestosis), or it can cause lung cancer or mesothelioma. These diseases can take from 20 to 50 years to develop and in most cases are fatal.

- **Managing our Asbestos Risks**

Ergon Energy and Energex have recently undertaken a comprehensive asbestos audit program that is ongoing to determine the location, condition and have risk assessed all identified asbestos containing materials (ACM) in assets constructed prior to 31st December 2003.

- **Our Processes**

Ergon Energy & Energex have implemented an Asbestos Permit to Work (PTW) and Clearance process.

If you are undertaking work on our assets and ACM may be disturbed either intentionally (eg Maintenance work or planned removal work), the PTW must be completed prior to any works being undertaken.

How to Safely Remove Asbestos Queensland Code of Practice 2011 must also be adhered to as a minimum requirement. More detailed information can be found in the *Contractor Asbestos Related Work or Asbestos Removal Work (Reference)*, this document is available from your Representative.

- **Our Responsibility**

Prior to any works being undertaken, the person commissioning the work or their delegate must:

- Provide a copy of the site Asbestos Register to the contractor. Accessed through the Asbestos Portal.
- The user name is oct\general and the password is gen@123.
- Review all relevant documentation e.g. PTW Form, Safe Work Method Statements and, Asbestos Removal Control Plan.
- If the work is licenced asbestos removal work, organise for the *Notice that Asbestos Removal Work is to be Carried Out at the Workplace (Form)* is completed and given to the relevant areas.

- **Contractor's Responsibility:**

Under Qld WHS Legislation, work that involves or is likely to involve, the disturbance of asbestos is classified as **high risk construction work**. This includes maintenance work.

Prior to undertaking any works, the contractor must:

- Obtain a copy of the site Asbestos Register
- Complete a Safe Work Method Statement or Asbestos Removal Control Plan
- Obtain approval by person commissioning the work or their delegate for the above documents
- Complete the PTW documentation if relevant

The contractor is required to inform the person commissioning the work or their delegate of any suspected asbestos that may be located in the course of the work being performed that was not on the Asbestos Register.

- **If there is ACM present?**

If there is a likelihood of disturbance or removal of ACM or Asbestos Containing Dust or Debris (ACD) then the PTW and Clearance Processes are to be followed as well as the requirements of the *How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace Queensland Code of Practice 2011* and the *How to Safely Remove Asbestos Queensland Code of Practice 2011*.

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- **Who can remove ACM?**

Friable asbestos – If friable and it has been determined that it should be removed, it must be removed by a Class A licensed removalist as soon as reasonably practicable.

Non-friable asbestos – If it is more than 10m² and has been determined that it should be removed, it must be removed by a Class B licensed asbestos removalist as soon as reasonably practicable.

No Licence is required for the removal of up to 10m² of non-friable asbestos or ACM or ACD that:

- Is associated with the removal of 10m² or less of non-friable asbestos or ACM; or

- Is not associated with the removal of friable or non-friable asbestos and is only a minor contamination.

- **Document Availability**

All documents referred to in this QRG are available via Ergon Energy Process Zone, Energex RED or Energex Forms.

More Information?

Contact your business contact or the Asbestos Manager on 4789 5073 or email:

wayne.cullen@energyq.com.au if you have any questions or would like any more information.