

Induction

The University has a program of labelling of in-situ asbestos containing materials (ACM). This safety bulletin provides answers to frequently asked questions about this program.

Why are asbestos labels required?

The University labels asbestos containing materials (ACM) as an additional risk control to ensure ACM is identifiable to anyone who may disturb the ACM. Improved identification will help minimise the risk of unintentional and uncontrolled disturbance of the ACM and the release of air-borne asbestos fibres.

Why are asbestos containing materials (ACM) present in University buildings?

The University owns and occupies buildings constructed and refurbished between the 1800's and current day. Asbestos was commonly used in commercial building products and residential building products in Australia until 1985. As a consequence, some University buildings have ACM.

When is asbestos a risk to health?

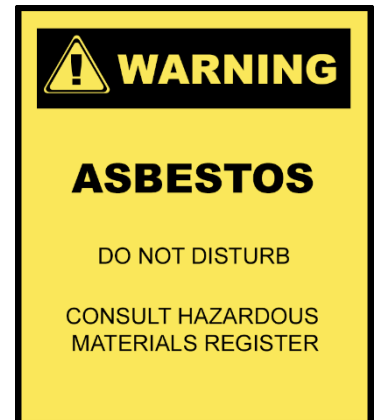
The presence of ACM does not automatically introduce a health risk. Health risks from ACM are primarily due to air-borne asbestos fibre exposure and inhalation. Asbestos fibres are microscopic and often not visible. Inhaled asbestos fibres may embed in the lungs where they can irritate the lung tissue as they are highly resistant to removal by the lungs' natural cleaning processes.

When can ACM release air-borne fibers?

ACM in good condition, sealed, isolated or left undisturbed are unlikely to release fibres into the air. ACM that has deteriorated or been disturbed increases likelihood of release of asbestos fibres into the air. Friable ACM (i.e. material that when dry, may be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to powder by hand pressure) and asbestos contaminated dust are most likely to release asbestos fibres into the air.

How has the ACM been identified?

Hazardous materials consultants have been previously engaged by the University to inspect and test samples of materials to confirm if the materials contain asbestos or do not contain asbestos. Where materials cannot be inspected or tested they are assumed or "deemed" to contain asbestos.



Where can I obtain information about ACM in my building?

Each University building constructed before 1990 has a hazardous materials register. This register is the primary and authoritative information source for ACM. The registers are accessible from Campus Services office at each campus. In addition, the most recent inspection survey for each building is published on the University's spatial information system (UoM SIS): <https://spaceinfo.staff.unimelb.edu.au/SISfm-Enquiry/UMELDefault/login.aspx>

Who will complete the labelling?

The hazardous materials consultants previously engaged to inspect and test the ACM have also been engaged to complete the labelling.

What risk controls will the consultants use when requiring access to restricted areas, such as laboratories?

The hazardous materials consultants are required to complete the University's contractor induction program and apply all local risk controls for entry in to laboratories and other restricted areas.

What types of ACM will be labelled in buildings?

Common types of materials requiring labelling include:

- Vinyl floor tiles and vinyl sheet flooring (sometimes under carpet)
- Mastics/sealants, including, joints of ductwork, walls and window seals
- Electrical switchboard backing boards
- Tile backing boards in bathrooms, kitchens and wet areas
- Fire doors
- Ceiling entry points, sub floor entry points and building risers
- Fume hood backing boards
- Cement sheet cladding
- Plant and equipment in plant rooms
- Materials or areas "deemed" to contain asbestos

What do I do if I discover suspected ACM?

1. Cease activity that may disturb ACM.
2. Isolate the area from further disturbance. eg Close & secure doors, hoard off area and provide signage. Arrange for ventilations systems isolation.
3. Seek assistance from Campus Services via Service Centre: 834 40888 – select facilities.
4. Hazardous materials information will be reviewed and if necessary hazardous materials consultants will be engaged to test suspected ACM and provide advice on controlling any health and safety risk.

What do I do if labels are deteriorating, missing or have been removed?

Advise Campus Service via Service Centre (834 40888 – select facilities) so that replacement labels can be arranged.

Who can I contact for further information?

- Campus Services via Service Centre: 834 40888 – select facilities
- Health and Safety Business Partners: <https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/health-and-safety-contacts>

Where can I find further information?

<https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/safety-topics/chemical-management-and-hazardous-waste/chemical-management#asbestos>