

SAFETY ALERT

HSE-ALERT-014

Date: 03 March, 2017

Area of Concern: Asbestos Awareness

Asbestos Awareness at JCU

Asbestos was used in building products due to its strength and fire resistance. Its use was phased out and banned in Australia by the late 1980s – early 1990s. Many buildings and structures from this era have asbestos containing materials (ACM).

There are two main categories of asbestos materials Bonded and Friable.

- Bonded asbestos containing materials are bound in a cement or resin matrix and are perfectly safe while it remains undisturbed. Common bonded asbestos building products are: cement sheeting; corrugated fence and roof sheeting; and cement pipes.
- Friable asbestos containing materials can be reduced to dust under hand pressure. Common friable asbestos building products included, fibre gaskets, insulation, underlay to vinyl floor coverings and low density sheeting.

James Cook University has an Asbestos Policy and Procedure for the management of asbestos containing materials. The intent of these documents is reduction of asbestos material by removal, and by not taking on more assets with asbestos containing materials. James Cook University has an extensive asbestos register identifying the location, type and condition of asbestos containing materials across the campuses. The Asbestos Register can be obtained from the James Cook University Estate Directorate and is available to all staff and contractors.

Asbestos containing materials have been identified on the Townsville Campus, at remote assets and lease buildings. James Cook University is undertaking labelling of all known asbestos containing materials.

The Cairns campus does not have any identified asbestos containing material.

Conducting construction or maintenance works?

The Estate Directorate coordinates the planning of any construction/maintenance.

Under the James Cook University Asbestos Management Procedure we are required to consult the asbestos register for a building before any work takes place. This includes, painting, changing floor coverings, and renovations both internal and external, essentially any work that could disturb the building.

All works involving asbestos materials are conducted under an Asbestos Permit issued by the Estate Directorate. Asbestos removal works are conducted by licenced asbestos removalists and monitored by third party Occupational Hygienists.

If you have concerns regarding asbestos please contact the Estate Directorate or James Cook University Health, Safety and Environment Unit (safety@jcu.edu.au).