

If calling please ask for: [REDACTED]  
Telephone: [REDACTED]

Reference: ESS-18-2793



**METROPOLITAN  
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SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

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Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing in relation to your application made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* in which you requested access to the following documents:

*"A copy of the Metropolitan Fire Service Policy / Procedure on dealing with asbestos at operational incidents."*

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your FOI application, and the documents to which you are given access, may be published in the agency's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at <http://dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-government/premier-and-cabinet-circulars>.

A search of files has been conducted and one (1) document was located that is within the scope of your application. The document is identified in the attached schedule.

In respect of the document, I have determined as follows:

#### **Document 1**

I have determined that this document should be released in full.

#### **Appeal Rights**

If you are dissatisfied with this determination, you are entitled to exercise your rights of review and appeal as outlined in the attached documentation.

Should you have any enquiries in relation to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

**Accredited Freedom of Information Officer**

7 August 2018



**Government  
of South Australia**

## SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS

Freedom of Information application by [REDACTED] – *“A copy of the Metropolitan Fire Service Policy / Procedure on dealing with asbestos at operational incidents.”*

Doc No	Description	Determination
1	South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service Hazardous Materials Circular 010 – Asbestos	Document released in full.

# SOUTH AUSTRALIAN METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS CIRCULAR 010 Asbestos



**METROPOLITAN  
FIRE  
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## What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring rock fibre and is a form of mineral silicate. The common forms of asbestos are chrysotile (white asbestos), crocidolite (blue asbestos) and amosite (brown or grey asbestos). Asbestos was widely used in building materials until the early 1970s. It was used in asbestos-cement roofing materials, sprayed-on fire, thermal or acoustic insulation materials, and as insulation for steam and water pipes and air-conditioning systems.

## Quick Facts

**Detected by:** No MFS detector  
**UN#:** 2212, 2590, 3077  
**CAS#:** 12172-73-5, 1332-21-4, 12001-28-4, 12001-29-5  
**Hazchem Code:** 2X, 2Z  
**TWA:** 0.1 fibres/cubic centimetre  
**Specific Gravity:** 2.56  
**Solubility:** Immiscible  
**PPE:** Level 2 and SCBA during fire; coveralls and respirators/SCBA at all other times  
**Decontamination:** See SOP1 Appendix FF

## Health Hazards of Asbestos

Significant health risks may arise from the inhalation of airborne asbestos fibres into the lungs. There are three major health hazards: asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma.

### *Asbestosis*

The risk of developing dust-related diseases depends on the concentration of the dust, the length of exposure and the nature of the dust (particularly the shape and size of the dust particles). Continued exposure to some kinds of dust can cause alterations to the lung structure and a deterioration of lung function. Examples are silicosis (from inhaling quartz dust) or coalworker's pneumoconiosis ('black lung'). The lung disease asbestosis is associated with asbestos exposure in asbestos mining and the shipbuilding trades.

### *Lung Cancer*

The most important cause of lung cancer is tobacco smoke, but exposure to asbestos may also cause lung cancer. A worker with heavy asbestos exposure has about five times the risk of lung cancer, compared to a non-exposed worker. If the worker was also a heavy smoker, the relative risk may be fifty times greater.

### *Mesothelioma*

Exposure to asbestos dusts, especially blue asbestos (crocidolite), causes mesothelioma, a cancer of the pleural lining of the lung. It can take from ten to fifty years after exposure to asbestos before mesothelioma will develop.

██████████ Hazardous Substances Officer, 2001

Revised by ██████████ Scientific Officer

Revised February 2017 Review Date February 2020

*The current up to date version is the version on the SAMFS Intranet.*



## Asbestos

- Hazardous Materials Circular No. 10

### Regulations Covering Asbestos

The Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations 2012 require building owners to identify any asbestos installed in a building and to determine a management strategy. If the asbestos presents a significant risk to health, it has to be removed by a competent contractor.



If there is asbestos in the building, an asbestos register must be maintained identifying the type, condition and location of the asbestos. This must be available for inspection for any person (including firefighters) who, in the course of their work, could come into contact with any asbestos materials.

There are also Codes of Practice located on the Safework SA that covers:

- National Code of Practice: How to Safely Remove Asbestos, December 2011
- National Code of Practice: How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace, December 2011
- Membrane Filter Method for estimating Airborne Asbestos Fibres 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (NOHSC: 3003 (2005))

### Operational Procedures for Firefighters

The presence of asbestos in a building may present a health or environmental hazard during fire fighting, particularly during overhaul or fire cause investigation. There may also be a need to ensure that the clean up of the fire scene meets requirements for the management of contaminated sites.

Since the health risk is due to breathing in the asbestos fibres, the objectives must be to avoid breathing the fibres at the scene and to avoid taking asbestos fibres away to contaminated living and working areas. SOP 1 Appendix FF details the procedures to be followed for operations within an area containing asbestos. The procedure concentrates on the use of respiratory protection (both breathing apparatus and cartridge respirators) and on the decontamination of clothing and equipment.

Suitable cartridge respirators and disposable overalls are carried on the Breathing Apparatus Tender (206), and the BA/Hazmat Pod.

### More Information

Head to [www.asbestos.sa.gov.au](http://www.asbestos.sa.gov.au)

ACTION	DATE	SIGN
Instruction received at station		
Read to A Shift		
Read to B Shift		
Read to C Shift		
Read to D Shift		
Placed on Noticeboard		
Filed in station file		

██████████ Hazardous Substances Officer, 2001

Revised by ██████████ Scientific Officer

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