

Working with Asbestos

Safety@Optus – Hazard Standard



What you need to know

Asbestos exposure has long been associated with serious lung diseases and cancer to which there is no cure. **There is no set amount or quantity of any type of asbestos, or time limit that you can be exposed to asbestos particles before it will do harm.** Inhaling a little bit of asbestos **"is not OK "**

That's why, if you are a Supplier to Optus, you must have sound ACM identification & risk management processes when there is a potential of working where (ACM) Asbestos Containing Material might be present.

Optus does not have an expectation of any contractors to carry out work involving ACM in the delivery of its telecommunication services – a licenced ACM professional as defined by WHS laws will be engaged to undertake this work

Note : ACM that is sealed, undamaged and left undisturbed is extremely unlikely to release asbestos fibres. This is known as **Bonded asbestos**. If your work does not involve disturbing the ACM, or it has no signs of deterioration it is generally safe to proceed

It is when it is in the form of, or turned into fine respirable size dust particles that it becomes dangerous to health . This is known as **Friable Asbestos** – If this is identified in any Optus work location – **Do Not proceed – it is not safe.** Do not allow anyone else to enter if possible and immediately call your Optus WHS representative for further instruction

Identification and testing

The No 1 rule, when working on any Optus site **" If you are not sure if it is ACM, treat it as it is ACM, and have it tested"** Some of the Optus locations where ACM may be encountered

- Older homes & structures built before 1990, Eves – walls - electrical boxes – flooring etc
- Old telecommunications infrastructure , Pits – Manholes – conduit- Ducts – pipe lagging electrical boxes -firewalls - cable risers etc
- Natural environment Unrefined natural asbestos in the ground
- Contaminated land Dumped asbestos, former industrial sites etc

Asbestos registers

Bonded ACM may be at some of our Optus facilities . Optus has a list of these sites available in the **Donesafe** platform which is accessible to Optus registered contractors via the Donesafe key user log in. For external sites such as mobile sites, the presence of ACM can be provided by the Site owners and advised to the contractor at the time of organising site access

There are specific licences and permits for carrying out work in regard to ACM. If Optus requires any works in regard to ACM, Optus will only engage the services of appropriately licence contractors to undertake this work

More information can be found at Safework Australia's [How to manage and control asbestos in the workplace](#)



Working with Asbestos

Safety@Optus – Contractor Requirements



Australian Standards & Industry Codes

It is the responsibility of the Contractor to be aware of asbestos licencing rules when working and have a documented a process of " where applicable" how it meets the relevant Australian codes and standards for working in the presence of ACM

Use of this Standard

This Standard "at times" will need to be read and used in parallel with other WHS standards to ensure that all concurrent duty holders are aware of its WHS obligations and all legislative requirements are being met.

All necessary site safety documentation related to working with ACM to facilitate the works must be kept and submitted to Optus as part of the site final phase handover pack.

The requirements listed in this standard will be used by Optus as part of the contractor audit assurance framework to verify the management of the WHS contractual and legislative obligations

Contractor Requirements

1. The Supplier must have a process of risk assessment to identify ACM where necessary.
2. Where it is already identified via an asbestos register, The Supplier must have a process make all workers on site aware of where the asbestos is and what controls need to be in place to ensure the asbestos is not disturbed or damaged, prior to the work commencing
3. The Contractor must have a process and be able to demonstrate how it factors this information into developing safe systems of work for all workers.
5. The control measures used to manage the different types of hazards associated with ACM must be clearly be communicated and consulted to all workers for input, the controls then documented on the site-specific SWMS and the project risk register if applicable to other sites.
6. Where applicable, conduct inspections of works to ensure compliance with the control measures that have been put in place to ensure the safe systems of work are effective
7. A Supplier must be able to verify that any Emergency plans, entry and exit plans developed are by an appropriately trained certified personal and the site supervision of the tasks are performed by appropriately trained and where applicable "certified personal "
8. The Supplier is to ensure that any Council or local authority permits that are required are on site and available upon request
9. There is to be accountable personal on site that can demonstrate the risk controls that are in place are fit for purpose and effective in preventing harm

All workers have the right to stop work if there is ACM suspected – if you suspect there is ACM and not sure – treat it as it is ACM and have it tested before proceeding