Safe Working Procedures (SWP) –
Sampling of Non Friable Asbestos Containing Materials

A risk assessment should be undertaken before any sampling of ACM is commenced and only competent persons should carry out work with ACM. Risk assessments can be generic in nature however the assessment must be a true reflection of the task to be performed if it is not, a new or revised risk assessment must be undertaken.

You can’t tell whether a material contains asbestos simply by looking at it, unless it is labeled. If in doubt, treat the material as if it contains asbestos. There is a risk to health if the surface of AC sheeting is disturbed or if the sheeting has deteriorated as a result of aggressive environmental factors such as weathering, cracked or is broken consequently the asbestos cement matrix may be eroded, increasing the likelihood that asbestos fibres will be released. A treatment method that does not disturb the matrix of the asbestos cement sheeting should be used, taking care not to release additional asbestos fibers into the air or onto you.

When sampling asbestos cement sheeting do not use a power drill as it may release asbestos fibres into the atmosphere. Removal of asbestos products must be done in accordance with the NOHSC Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos [NOHSC:2002(2005)].

Equipment
In addition to any equipment required to complete the particular task, the following equipment may be required on-site prior to commencing the work:

- Disposable cleaning rags or paper towel;
- A bucket of water, or more, as appropriate and/or a misting spray bottle;
- Duct tape;
- Sealant (eg 3:1 dilution of PVA glue and water);
- Spare personal protective equipment (PPE);
- A suitable collection (eg 200 μm plastic bags);
- 200 μm plastic sheeting;
- Warning signs and/or barrier tape;
- An asbestos vacuum cleaner with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters;
- Pliers, chisel or screwdriver to separate the sample;
- Small amount of detergent.

Personal Protective Equipment
- A class P2 half face disposable respirator will be adequate for this task, provided this recommended safe work procedure is followed and the mask is kept fitted during the collection and bagging activity;
- If you are sampling overhead, we recommend that you use a full body disposable suit and goggles;
- Wear disposable gloves or wash hands after sampling.

Asbestos Work Area Preparation
- If the work is to be carried out at a height, appropriate precautions must be taken to prevent the risk of persons falling;
- Ensure appropriately marked asbestos sampling bags are available;
- Room occupants will be directed to vacate whilst sampling is taken place;
- Segregate the asbestos work area to ensure unauthorised personnel are restricted from entry (eg close door and/or use warning signs and/or barrier tape at all entry points). The distance for segregation should be determined by a risk assessment;
- If possible, use plastic sheeting, secured with duct tape, to cover any surface within the asbestos work area that could become contaminated;
- Ensure there is adequate lighting;
- Avoid working in windy environments where asbestos fibres can be redistributed;
• if using a bucket of water, do not resoak used rags in the bucket, as this will contaminate the water. Instead, either fold the rag so a clean surface is exposed or use another rag.

**Sampling of ACM**

• Make sure no one else is in the room when sampling is done;
• Shut down any heating or cooling systems to minimize the spread of any released fibers;
• Do not disturb the material any more than is needed to take a small sample;
• Place a plastic sheet on the floor below the area to be sampled;
• Wet the material using a fine mist of water containing a few drops of detergent before taking the sample. The water/detergent mist will reduce the release of asbestos fibers;
• Carefully cut a piece from the entire depth of the material using, for example, a knife, or other sharp object;
• Place the small piece into a clean container such as a suitable 200 μm plastic bag;
• Double bag the samples with the labeled bag provided;
• Tightly seal the container after the sample is in it;
• Label the container with an identification number and clearly state when and where the sample was taken;
• After taking the sample, seal the edges from where the sample was taken with PVA glue applied by a hand-held spray bottle;
• Use a damp paper towel to clean up any material on the outside of the container or around the area sampled;
• Patch the sampled area with a piece of duct tape to prevent fiber release.

**Decontaminating the Asbestos Work Area and Equipment**

• Use a damp paper towel to clean up any equipment or material around the area sampled;
• Carefully roll or fold any plastic sheeting used to cover any surface within the asbestos work area, so as not to spill any dust or debris that has been collected;
• If necessary, use damp paper towel or a vacuum cleaner fitted with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to clean any remaining visibly contaminated sections of the asbestos work area;
• Place debris, used paper towel, plastic sheeting and other waste in the asbestos waste bags/container;
• Wet wipe the external surfaces of the asbestos waste bags/container to remove any adhering dust before they are removed from the asbestos work area.

**Clearance Procedure**

• Visually inspect the asbestos work area to make sure it has been properly cleaned;
• Clearance air sampling is not required for this task.

**Personal Decontamination**

• Remove all visible asbestos dust/residue from protective clothing using a vacuum cleaner with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter and/or wet wiping;
• Remove disposable coveralls (while still using a respirator), and place in an asbestos waste bag and dispose of as asbestos waste;
• Clothing and footwear worn during the asbestos work should be vacuumed using a vacuum cleaner with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters and the footwear should also be wet wiped;
• Disposable respirators should then be discarded as asbestos waste. Non-disposable respirators should be removed and thoroughly cleaned;
• After removing the respirator, workers should wash their head, face and hands, paying particular attention to their fingernails.

Dispose of all waste as asbestos waste. Refer to the NOHSC *Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos* [NOHSC:2002 (2005)] and relevant State and Territory legislation.