

INFORMATION SHEET 3

# SURVEYING A BUILDING TO DETERMINE WHETHER ASBESTOS IS PRESENT

**Assume that any material may contain asbestos.**

## HOW CAN YOU CONFIRM THE PRESENCE OF ASBESTOS?

The only way to positively confirm the presence of asbestos in a building material is to have the material tested using a method specified by an IANZ-accredited laboratory for asbestos testing.

If asbestos or asbestos-containing material (ACM) has been found in one part of a building, assume that it **will** be present in all similar materials in the building.

## HOW DO YOU SURVEY A BUILDING FOR ASBESTOS?

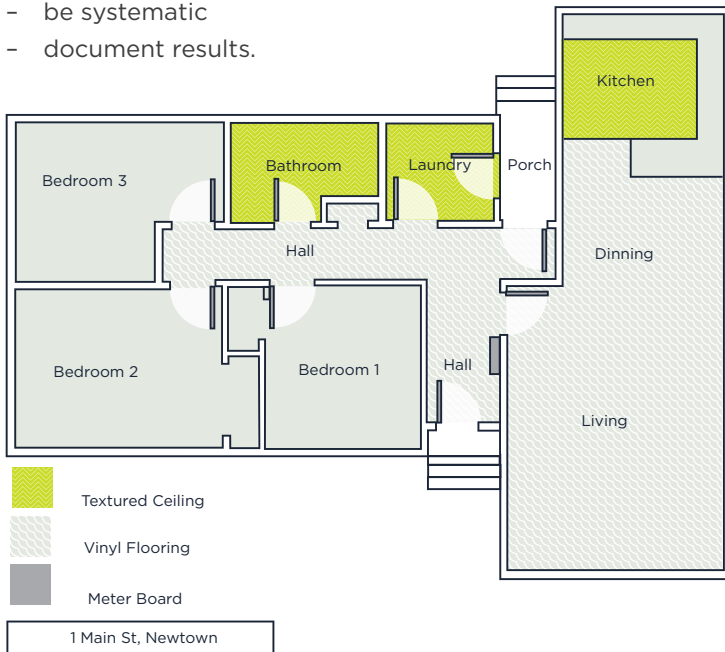
*Step 1: Complete the checklist below*

Age of building	Y/N	Notes
Was the building built before 1990?		
Were renovations/ alterations done before 1990?		
Other evidence that asbestos/ACM may be present		

- > If the answers are NO to all three questions, and there is no other evidence of asbestos or reason to suspect that there may be asbestos, repair or demolition work may begin.
- > If the answer is YES to any of the questions, carry out a more detailed survey of the building.

## *Step 2: Carry out a more detailed survey*

1. Draw a simple floor plan of the building (see the example below) and identify all rooms and spaces.
2. Work through the checklist below to identify locations where there may be asbestos.
3. Record the locations where you think asbestos might be present on the floor plan.
4. When carrying out the building survey:
  - be systematic
  - document results.



Location	Check	Y/N	If yes, identify rooms	Are samples required to be taken for testing (Y/N)?
Ceilings	Do the ceilings have a textured finish? Are ceiling tiles present? Do the ceilings have a lathe and plaster (skim coat?)			
Interior linings	Do walls have a sprayed or textured finish? Are walls lathe and plaster? Are walls made from cement sheet? Is there insulation board around fireplaces or similar? Is there plasterboard lining and a jointing compound?			
Flooring	Is there vinyl or lino sheet or tile flooring?			
Roof	Is the roofing corrugated cement or slate? Check guttering <sup>1</sup> , downpipes, rainwater heads			
Soffits	Are the soffit linings cement board or similar?			
Exterior cladding	Is the cladding cement sheet board or shingle? Is imitation brick/stone cladding present?			
Insulation	Is asbestos-based insulation in walls or ceiling suspected? Is lagging used for insulation? Is the hot water cylinder insulated?			
Pipes	Have drainage pipes been inspected?			
Other	Have the flues been inspected? Have fuse boards (millboards) or the lining in fuse holders been inspected? Has the fire cement in older chimneys been inspected? Has the night store heater been inspected? Have fences been inspected? Are there other areas where asbestos or ACM is suspected?			

<sup>1</sup> If the roof is asbestos, debris in the gutters will also contain asbestos.

## TAKING SAMPLES TO TEST FOR ASBESTOS

A person taking samples must be competent to work in an asbestos-hazard condition without causing risk to their own health and safety. The person should have knowledge and experience of the:

- > types and locations of ACM
- > hazards of asbestos exposure
- > correct use, maintenance and storage of PPE (personal protection equipment)
- > safe use of plant and equipment they need to use for taking samples.

When taking samples:

- > be methodical
- > take several samples from each location
- > identify and record the location of each sample taken
- > store samples from different locations separately
- > store all samples safely
- > use appropriate PPE.

*Step 3: Record the locations where the asbestos samples tested positive on the floor plan*

