



ASBESTOS INFORMATION SHEET – DEFENCE ASBESTOS EXPOSURE EVALUATION SCHEME (DAEES)

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a mineral which has been mined extensively and processed for many commercial applications throughout the world. It is commonly known in its various forms as blue asbestos (crocidolite), brown asbestos (amosite), or white asbestos (chrysotile).

The resistance of asbestos to fire and chemical breakdown and its fibrous structure are properties which have made it so useful in many products. We are familiar with its use in building material as asbestos cement sheeting (fibro), insulation and various fireproof fabrics. It was also used in ships and aircraft for lagging, fire retarding and soundproofing.

Asbestos products were found and used in many defence installations and applications. Because of their inherent properties, they were utilised in building materials, thermal and acoustic insulation gaskets, seals, brake pads, aircraft panels and as filler in adhesives. These products were prevalent in facilities and ships used by the Australian Defence Force.

IS ALL ASBESTOS HARMFUL?

All types of airborne asbestos fibres are unsafe for humans. There is no amount of asbestos exposure low enough to be guaranteed 100 per cent free of health risk. Asbestos can be found naturally in low levels in most parts of Australia.

Asbestos can cause a number of diseases. Inhaled fibres are the cause of asbestos lung diseases such as mesothelioma, lung cancer and asbestosis. Also it is possible that swallowed fibres can cause abdominal disease. For almost all asbestos related diseases, the risk depends on the dose.

WHAT IS DEFENCE DOING?

Defence established a Defence Asbestos Exposure Evaluation Scheme (DAEES) in 1991 to assist current serving members and ex-serving members, current or former civilian employees that may have been exposed to asbestos during their time of service or employment. Members are required to register for DAEES by calling 1800 DEFENCE (1800 333 362). Upon registration your name will be recorded along with contact details and a record of how the Defence-related exposure to asbestos may have occurred.

Current and former ADF members may lodge a claim with the Department of Veterans' Affairs if they believe that their health has been adversely affected by exposure to asbestos. Call 133 254.

Additional information about the DAEES program is available on the OHSC Internet website at <http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/ohsc/programs/asbestos/default.htm>

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Current serving members – Once registered and you believe you have been exposed to asbestos through your service employment, you must also submit a Defence WHS Incident Report via WHS-ISS (Incident Self Service) available via PMKeys Self Service and contact your local Health Services to arrange an exposure evaluation. You may also lodge a claim with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) if you believe that your health has been affected by this exposure to asbestos. DVA can be contacted on 133 254.



Ex-serving members – Once registered and you believe you have been exposed to asbestos through your service employment, you should contact Medibank Health Solutions to arrange a medical assessment. You may also lodge a claim with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) if you believe that your health has been affected by exposure to asbestos. DVA can be contacted on 133 254.

Current and former civilian employees – Once registered and you believe that you have been exposed to asbestos through your Defence employment, you should contact Medibank Health Solutions for a medical assessment. Current employees must also submit a Defence WHS Incident Report via WHS-ISS (Incident Self Service) available via PMKeys Self Service.

ADF Cadets, Officers of Cadets – Once registered and you believe that you have been asbestos through your service employment, you should submit a Defence WHS Incident Report (Web form AC563) and email to ac563@defence.gov.au or fax 1800 563 563 and contact Medibank Health Solutions to arrange a exposure evaluation.

Note: if you have a PMKeys ID and access to the DRN you must then report via WHS-ISS (Incident Self Service) available via PMKeys Self Service.

Medibank Health Solution have been contracted to provide initial assessment, review assessments, counselling and, if necessary, testing and specialist referrals. Please note that all specialist referrals are to be approved by the Department of Defence prior to an appointment being made by Medibank Health Solutions. If you are unable to attend an appointment you must cancel at your earliest opportunity. Last minute cancellations or none attendance may result in cancellation fees being imposed.

Immediate family members of ADF or ex ADF members are eligible to register with the scheme; prior approval will be required from Director General Work Health and Safety if a medical examination is deemed necessary.

The service being provided by Medibank Health Solution relates only to investigating the effects, if any, of asbestos exposure during employment with Defence. It is not aimed at detecting any other medical conditions if it appears that the disease or illness is related to your employment with Defence, you may have a right to apply for compensation. In this case, the local contact officer for the Scheme will be available to discuss options for lodging a claim.

Contractors and visiting personnel to Defence establishments – under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*, Defence has a duty to take all reasonably practical steps to protect the health and safety of contractors, their staff and other persons at or near Defence controlled workplaces. Employees of contractors employed by other Companies on Defence projects can register their details with DAEES by contacting 1800 DEFENCE (1800 333 362). However they have no entitlement to medical counselling and preliminary medical examinations. They will need to contact their employer for further information.