

Nelson Office

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Ph / Fax: (03) 546 1537 / (03) 546 1542

Marlborough Office

Marlborough Health Hub
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ASBESTOS

How to take a Sample for Lab Testing

The Public Health Service does not undertake asbestos testing for building reports related to property sale/purchase agreements, for commercial/rental property, for builders, or other commercial enterprises. We only undertake free testing for householders wanting to remove their own (DIY) flooring or cladding material that potentially contains asbestos. Contractors may send a sample directly to a laboratory at their cost. Two companies offer this asbestos testing service:

- Capital Environmental Services - www.fibres.co.nz
- Hill Laboratories - www.hill-laboratories.com

The Ministry of Health, www.moh.govt.nz, Worksafe NZ, www.worksafe.govt.nz and Capital Environmental Services Ltd www.fibres.co.nz websites contain good information on asbestos.

The Public Health Service undertake free testing for householders wanting to remove their own (DIY) flooring or cladding material that potentially contains asbestos. If you decide to take your own sample, it is important that you do it safely, making sure that you do not expose yourself or others to asbestos fibres.

If you are considering taking your own sample please read the “How to Take an Asbestos Sample for Lab Testing” information on our website under “Asbestos” in the Hazardous Substances topic.

A laboratory test takes approximately 4-7 days from receipt of the sample depending on the work load. If the sample is positive the lab report will state:

- Type of asbestos (chrysotile (white), crocidolite (blue), amosite (brown))
- Category of asbestos i.e. friable or non-friable:
 - Friable Asbestos: means asbestos that under ordinary conditions can be easily crumbled e.g. in a powder form or able to be crumbled, pulverized, or reduced to a powder by hand pressure when dry.
 - Non-friable Asbestos: means asbestos that is not in a powder form or cannot be crumbled, pulverized, or reduced to a powder by hand pressure when dry. e.g. asbestos cement sheet in good condition.
- The report will not tell you how much asbestos there is in the material.

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There are no mandated controls for home owners wishing to remove material containing asbestos (friable or non-friable) themselves. However, the home owner should protect themselves (and others) as a best practice precaution recommended in the Worksafe Approved Code of Practice, Management & Removal of Asbestos.

There is a recommendation from WorkSafe NZ and the Ministry of Health that a home owner should restrict the work they do themselves to an area of asbestos containing material to less than 10 square metres and any asbestos containing material that is “friable” should only be removed by a Worksafe licensed asbestos removal contractor.

A list of approved contractors is found on the Worksafe web page at the following link:
<https://worksafe.govt.nz/asbestos/>

The Ministry of Health website contains the following publications on asbestos:

- [All About Asbestos 2018 - Protecting your Health at Home](#)
- [Removing Asbestos from the Home 2020](#)

Homeowners should contact your Local Authority to discuss any Building Act requirements and for advice on the disposal of the asbestos containing material removed from your property