Asbestos Removal

Information from WorkSafe Victoria on the suitable protective wear for removing asbestos in workplaces.

WorkSafe Victoria has recently become aware of the use of unsuitable disposable coveralls for asbestos removal processes in workplaces. These coveralls generally do not display any markings to indicate their suitability or otherwise for use with toxic dusts such as asbestos.The WorkSafe Victoria Compliance Code Removing Asbestos in Workplaces states that disposable coveralls should be of a suitable standard to prevent penetration of asbestos fibres as far as practicable. Disposable coveralls rated Category 3, Type 5 (prEN ISO 13982-1) or equivalent would meet this standard.The Pro-Val Hazguard SMS triple layer coverall meets these standards, made from non woven polypropylene, spunbond, meltblown and spunbond. This triple layer matrix acts like a filter to keep out smaller particles, i.e. asbestos. Each coverall is individually packaged with informative details on the outside of the packaging including a fabric performance chart, standards, areas of use, limitations and more.

WorkSafe Victoria Compliance Code removing asbestos in workplaces.

Coveralls* Clothing made from wool or other materials that attract fibrous dusts should not be worn at the asbestos removal site. Coveralls should not have external pockets or velcro fastenings because these are easily contaminated and difficult to decontaminate. Any clothing worn under coveralls must be disposed of or suitably bagged for laundering as asbestos-contaminated clothing. Disposable coveralls are preferred although some are easily torn (these are unsuitable and should not be worn). Disposable coveralls should also: * Never be re-used or taken home * Be disposed of as asbestos waste after a single use * Be of a suitable standard to prevent penetration of asbestos fibres as far as practicable. Disposable coveralls rated type 5, category 3 (prEN ISO 13982-1) or equivalent would meet this standard * Be one size too big as this will help prevent ripping at the seams. * If cuffs are loose ensure they are sealed with tape * Ensure coverall legs are worn over footwear as tucking them in lets dust in * Ensure the hood is worn over the respirator straps* In some limited circumstances, for example if there is a fire hazard, disposable protective clothing is not appropriate and re-usable types may be used.* Used non-disposable coveralls must be either disposed of after a single use or laundered. However, laundering of asbestos-contaminated protective clothing is not recommended because decontamination cannot be guaranteed. * Special attention needs to be paid to the risk of heat stress and burns from working in very hot environments. A competent person needs to assess this risk and determine the most suitable protective clothing and decontamination procedures for employees in these situations.Gloves* The use of protective gloves needs to be determined by a risk assessment. If significant quantities of asbestos fibres may be present, single-use disposable gloves need to be worn. If latex gloves must be used, select low protein (powder free) gloves. Gloves used for asbestos removal work need to be disposed of as asbestos waste. Laundering/cleaning these gloves is not recommended due to physical damage/deterioration as a result of the work performed and cleaning process.* Regardless of whether gloves are used, asbestos removal workers needs to clean their hands and fingernails thoroughly after work.Footwear* Appropriate safety footwear (ie steel-capped, rubber-soled work shoes or gumboots) needs to be provided for all persons removing asbestos. This footwear needs to be laceless as laces and eyelets are easily contaminated and difficult to clean. Footwear needs to remain inside the barricaded area or dirty decontamination area for the duration of the asbestos removal work and should not be shared due to hygiene reasons. When safety footwear is not in use it needs to be stored upside down to minimise asbestos-contamination inside the footwear. Storage facilities need to be provided to allow this. Disposable overshoes should be avoided because they cause a slipping risk* At the end of the job and upon leaving the work area, safety footwear must be: * Decontaminated * Sealed in double bags for use on the next asbestos removal site (but not for any other type of work), or * Disposed as asbestos wasteFor further information on protective equipment and requirements for asbestos removal visit WorkSafe Victoria.WorkSafe Victoria, "Compliance Code - Removing asbestos in workplaces". General requirements for all asbestos removal - Edition No. 1, September 2008, Pages 25-26

Contacts

Rachel Zammit

mailto: