

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



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Avoid asbestos exposure this long weekend

The EPA is warning home owners who plan to do maintenance and renovation work this long weekend, to first consider their personal health and safety and to make the right decisions to reduce their risk of exposure to asbestos.

This year, there have been several incidents reported to the EPA involving the cleaning of corrugated asbestos-type roofing with high pressure sprays.

EPA Manager Investigations and Tactical Support Stephen Barry, said old houses which were commonly built with asbestos products including roofing, pose the biggest threat especially when people take-on renovation and cleaning tasks.

“The EPA is aware of incidents where home owners have used high-pressure water sprays to clean their roof and causing asbestos fibres to be released creating a health risk to themselves and their neighbours,” he said.

“In one of these cases, a property owner was left with a costly clean-up bill that required professional attention.”

The EPA encourages anyone who may be contemplating cleaning a roof or removing sheets that may contain asbestos, to first seek advice from a professional in this field.

Asbestos materials were commonly used in buildings constructed before the 1980s that can crumble into fine material or dust with light pressure, known as friable, or are made from a bonding compound with a small proportion of asbestos, known as non-friable.

Friable material should only be removed by a Class-A licensed asbestos remover.

Mr Barry said that anyone contemplating a renovation or clean-up project this long-weekend, especially on an older house, should seek advice first before commencing the work.

“In some cases the best solution may be to abandon the project or alternatively get a professional tradesperson to do the job and reduce the health and safety risk.”

In South Australia, the EPA and SafeWork SA are the two agencies that work together to ensure that when a home renovation requires the removal of asbestos that it is done properly and safely.

For more information, visit http://asbestos.sa.gov.au/remove_homes.html

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