

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



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Roof-cleaning advice to reduce asbestos exposures

The EPA is warning home owners to consider their personal health and safety before taking on maintenance and renovation work that could expose them to asbestos.

This follows two recent incidents that have been reported to the EPA involving cleaning corrugated asbestos-type roofing with high pressure sprays.

EPA Manager Investigations and Tactical Support, Stephen Barry said old houses were commonly built with asbestos products including the roof.

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

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

The EPA encourages anyone who may be contemplating cleaning a roof that may contain asbestos, to seek advice first 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, especially on an older house, to first seek advice.

“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 risk to one’s health and safety.”

In South Australia, the Environment Protection Authority (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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