



The Hidden Hazard: The Essential Guide to Managing Asbestos in New Zealand Renovations

The Silent Threat in Our Homes Asbestos remains the leading cause of work-related deaths in New Zealand.

If you are renovating or demolishing a property, particularly one built before January 1, 2000, Auckland Council and WorkSafe assume asbestos is present. The Auckland Council strongly recommends treating any pre-1990 building material as if it contains asbestos until laboratory testing proves otherwise.

Despite the severe health risks, many well-intentioned homeowners and small contractors struggle to do the right thing because pathways for safe handling and disposal are often unclear. This guide breaks down the strict health and safety regulations governing asbestos to protect your family, your community, and the workers on your site.

What type of asbestos do I have?

Yes

Is it easily crushed or powdered by hand?

No

Class A: Friable Asbestos

Powder-Like Easily Crushed High Risk: Fibres are Airborne

Must Be Licenced

Class B: Non-Friable Asbestos

Bonded/Hard Lower Risk: If Undisturbed

DIY can do under 10m2

The Rules of Removal: Who Can Do the Work?

As of 2026, regulations have become highly prescriptive regarding who is legally allowed to handle and remove asbestos. The rules depend entirely on the type and amount of asbestos present:

Class A (Friable):

This is high-risk asbestos that can easily be crumbled into powder, such as pipe lagging or spray-on fireproofing. This must be removed by a Class A licensed contractor.

Class B (Non-Friable):

This includes hard, bound materials like fiber-cement sheets (often found in super six roofing or exterior cladding).

Under 10m²: Can be removed by a "competent person" (which can include DIY-ers). A competent person must have the knowledge, experience, and skills to carry out the task safely with the correct Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Over 10m²: Must be removed by a licensed Class B (or Class A) contractor.

Notification Rule: If you hire licensed contractors, they are legally required to notify WorkSafe New Zealand at least five days before any licensed removal work begins.

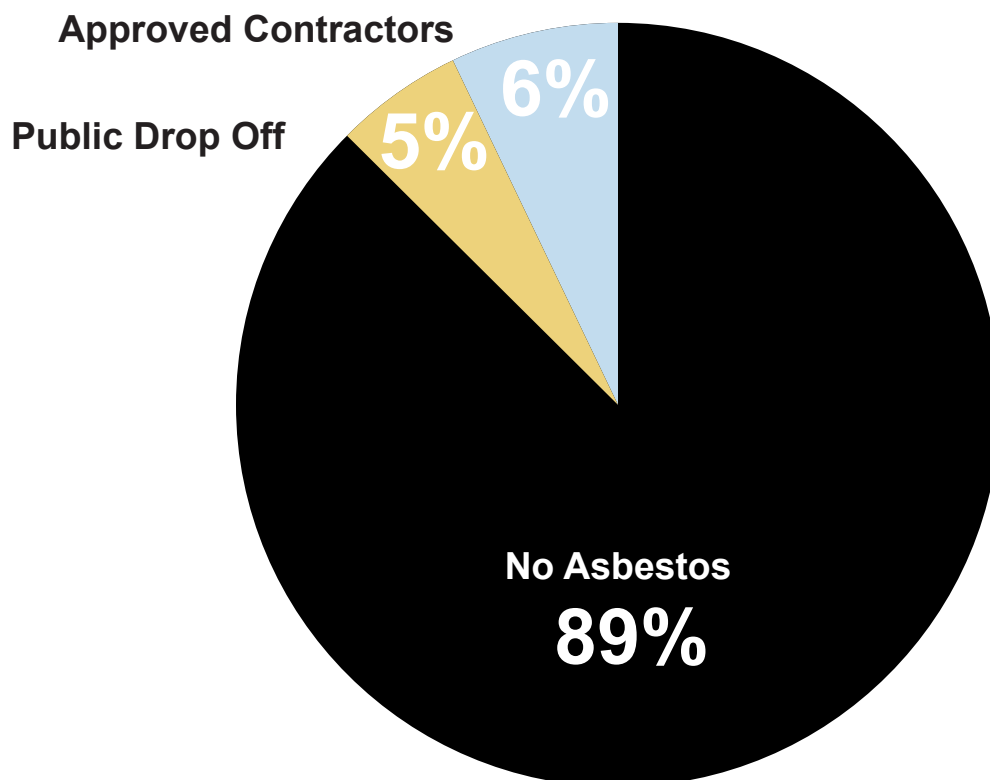


Navigating Council Consents and Clearances

If you are planning a renovation in Auckland, your building consent application will likely require an Asbestos Survey or Management Plan.

Once a licensed contractor finishes removing the hazardous material from your property, the job is not officially over. An independent assessor must inspect the site and issue a Clearance Certificate. You are required to provide this certificate to the Auckland Council before they will issue your final Code Compliance Certificate (CCC).

Availability of Public Asbestos Disposal Facilities



The Disposal "Blind Spot"

Disposal is one of the biggest hurdles for DIY-ers and small contractors. A recent investigation by the Environmental Innovation Centre (EIC) revealed a massive lack of information and accessible disposal options across New Zealand.

The Shocking Statistics:

- Out of 70 regional and district council websites reviewed, only 14% provided clear information on where to dispose of asbestos.
- Out of 234 landfills and transfer stations reviewed, 89% do not accept any form of asbestos waste.
- Only 6% accept asbestos waste from the general public, while 5% only accept it from licensed contractors.

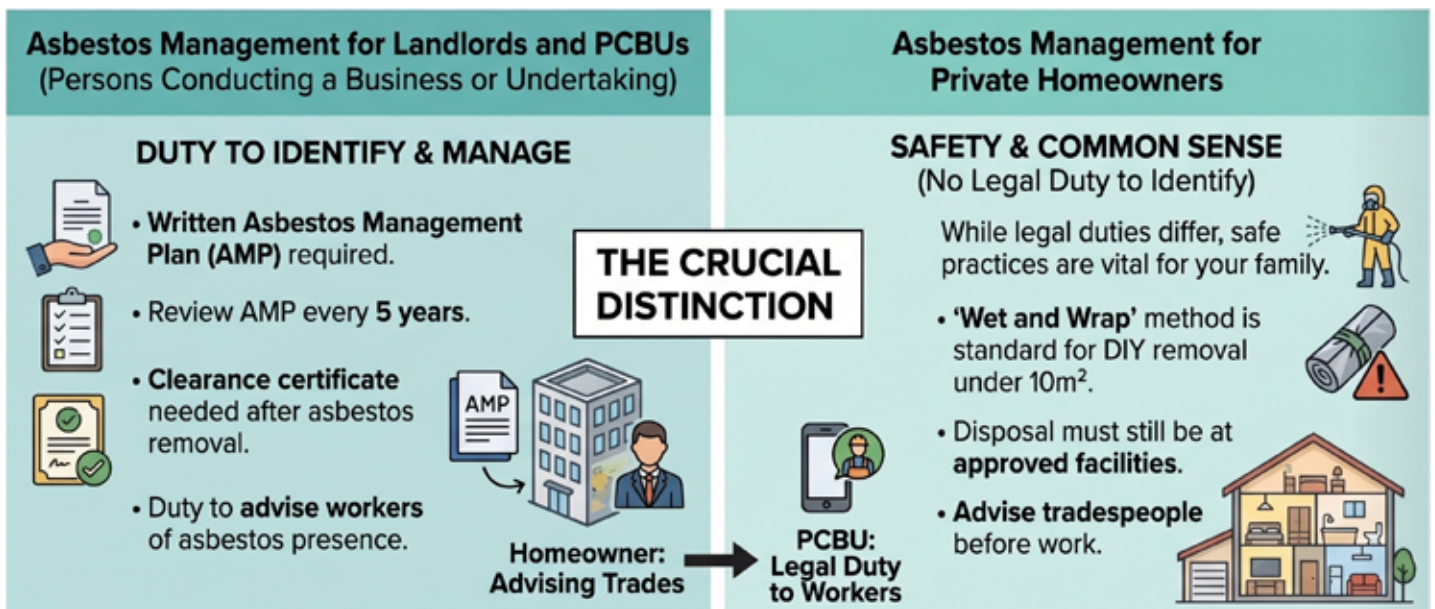
How to Dispose of Asbestos in Auckland

In Auckland, general transfer stations (like those in Henderson or Tamaki) do not accept asbestos from the public. You must never put asbestos in your household rubbish or inorganic collection.

Instead, you must use a licensed hazardous waste contractor to transport and dispose of the material at approved commercial landfills, such as Redvale, Whitford Landfill, or Hampton Downs.

If you are legally dropping off asbestos at an approved facility yourself, you must:

- Complete an approval form and obtain a hazardous waste disposal permit.
- Wrap and seal the waste in approved 200-micron asbestos waste bags and/or double wrap it in heavy-duty 200-micron polythene sheeting.
- Follow the specific Health and Safety controls of that facility during drop-off.



Responsibilities: Are you a PCBU or a Homeowner?

The law treats homeowners and business owners differently when it comes to long-term asbestos management:

Landlords & Business Owners (PCBUs): You have a strict legal duty to identify asbestos on your premises and maintain a written Asbestos Management Plan (AMP). This plan must be actively reviewed at least every five years.

Homeowners: While the strict PCBU rules do not apply to you while you are simply living in your home, the rules change the moment you hire tradespeople. The moment a plumber, electrician, or builder steps on site, your home becomes a "workplace". You must ensure the work is done safely to protect those workers from asbestos exposure.

The Safe Management Checklist

Before you swing a hammer, ensure you have ticked these boxes:

- Testing: Use an IANZ-accredited lab to confirm if a material is an Asbestos Containing Material (ACM). We highly recommend using a FAMANZ (Faculty of Asbestos Management of Australia and NZ) specialist to identify it.
- Small DIY (<10m²): If attempting legal, small-scale Class B removal, you must use double 200-micron plastic wrap, H-class vacuums, and full PPE.
- Large Projects (>10m²): Hire a licensed professional removalist.
- Council Consent: Include your asbestos removal plan in your application and ensure you receive the Clearance Certificate upon completion.
- Disposal: Contact a private hazardous waste company to manage disposal at a commercial landfill; do not use standard skip bins.

STEP 1: CONFIRMED TESTING & CLASSIFICATION



- ✓ Use an IANZ-accredited lab to confirm material type (Friable vs. Non-Friable).

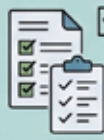


- ✓ Receive formal lab report and classification.

STEP 2: PRE-REMOVAL REQUIREMENTS



- ✓ Obtain Council hazardous waste disposal permit (required before drop-off).



- ✓ Complete disposal facility's application/ approval form.



- ✓ For PCBU/ Landlord: Written AMP in place and reviewed.



- ✓ For Licensed Work: Contractor notification to WorkSafe NZ – (at least 5 days prior).

STEP 3: REMOVAL & CONTAINMENT



- ✓ Ensure all workers have correct RPE and PPE (Respiratory and Personal Protective Equipment).

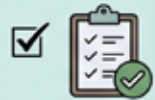


Use "Wet & Wrap" method to control dust.

- ✓ Wrap and seal waste in approved 200-micron bags or polythene sheeting (double wrap recommended). Label as Hazardous Asbestos Waste.



Use licensed waste contractor for transport or confirm specialist public facility access.



After removal, obtain independent clearance certificate.

SITE FILES DOCUMENTATION

- ✓ Lab Test Results
- ✓ Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) (if required)
- ✓ Disposal Permit / Receipt
- ✓ Clearance Certificate (post-removal)
- ✓ Record of PPE/RPE issue to workers.

www.wastehub.co.nz/asbestos-disposal-finder
Refer to WorkSafe NZ guidelines for complete detailed protocols.

RETRO
Construction

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