

Coveralls used for asbestos removal

This Alert warns of the dangers of wearing unsuitable disposable coveralls for asbestos removal work.

August 2010

Background

WorkSafe Victoria has found some licensed asbestos removalists wearing unsuitable disposable coveralls during asbestos removal.

The coveralls are usually made from single layer, lightweight polypropylene. They allow fine dust to penetrate the coveralls and tend to tear easily. If dust containing asbestos fibres has penetrated the coveralls and settled on clothing or skin underneath, there is an increased risk of inhalation of these fibres.

Inhalation of asbestos fibres is a serious health risk and can lead to diseases such as mesothelioma, lung cancer and asbestosis.

These disposable coveralls are usually supplied with little or no information to enable an employer to determine if they are suitable for asbestos removal. In some cases the coveralls have been advertised as suitable for asbestos use, however no test reports have been provided to confirm this.

Control measures

Use disposable coveralls that are of a suitable standard to prevent penetration of asbestos fibres. Disposable coveralls rated type 5, category 3 (prEN ISO 13982-1) or equivalent meet this standard and are suitable for use during asbestos removal. Refer to WorkSafe Victoria Compliance Code - *Removing asbestos in workplaces* for more information.

Importers and suppliers

Importers and suppliers of disposable coveralls must ensure they provide sufficient and accurate information with their coveralls to comply with their duty to provide information under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.

Employers

Employers using disposable coveralls during asbestos removal must ensure the coveralls are suitable for this purpose (ie type 5). If the coveralls or their packaging are not labelled as suitable for asbestos removal work, employers need to obtain information from the supplier to check their suitability.

WorkSafe Victoria is carrying out workplace inspections to ensure suitable disposable coveralls are being used.

Further information

WorkSafe Compliance Code - *Removing asbestos in workplaces* (Page 25)

Contact details

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For more information on occupational health and safety, go to WorkSafe's website: worksafe.vic.gov.au

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