



THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Safe removal and disposal of asbestos

Norfolk Island Minister for the Environment, Education and Social Welfare, the Hon Vicky Jack MLA, has drawn the community's attention to the new provisions for safe removal and disposal of asbestos and asbestos related products. Amendments to the *Waste Management Act 2003* were agreed to by the Legislative Assembly this week and took effect from gazettal on Friday 3 July.

Mrs Jack said that the amendments make it an offence to dispose of these products other than at the Waste Management Centre and with the prior approval of an authorised officer at the Centre. As asbestos is recognised as posing significant health hazards, the penalties for non-compliance are significant.

"I am grateful to the Members of the Assembly for understanding the importance of putting in place strong safeguards on the removal and handling of asbestos", Mrs Jack said. "We are all aware of the significant health dangers posed by asbestos and are determined to ensure that we comply with world best practice to protect everyone in the community from exposure to asbestos-related risks".

There are two key provisions in the changes to the legislation. Section 13A of the Act makes it an offence to remove asbestos or related product from a place where it has been dumped or to remove it from any place unless it is immediately made safe by correctly packing and labelling it in approved containers and properly disposed of.

Section 13B of the Act sets out the requirements for all asbestos and asbestos related substances to be disposed of at the Waste Management Centre with the prior approval of the officer in charge. The penalty for failure to comply with either section is a maximum fine of 100 penalty units (\$10,000).

The Administration of Norfolk Island has published guidelines on Safe Disposal of Asbestos at the Waste Management Centre, which are available from the Administration website at http://admindata/adminforms/Public%20forms/building_planning. Anyone seeking a hard copy of the policy or further advice on safe asbestos removal may contact the Risk Management Officer, Melissa Graham, by email to mgraham@admin.gov.nf or by telephone on 22001 extension 121.

Mrs Jack said that the guidelines are comprehensive, and include advice on safe equipment, work methods, preparation, labelling, warning signs, cleaning up and decontamination. They also detail the procedures to be followed at the Waste Management Centre, including the need to make arrangements **in advance** for any delivery by contacting the Centre on 24090.

Charges will be applied for the disposal of asbestos and asbestos-related materials at the Waste Management Centre as follows:

Small Domestic loads	One cubic metre or less	No Charge
Medium Domestic Loads	One to Two cubic metres	\$150.00
Large Domestic Loads	First two cubic metres then \$100.00 per cubic metre or part thereof over and above the first two cubic metres	\$150.00
Loads from commercial premises	Per cubic metre	\$200.00

Mrs Jack thanked the community for its understanding of the need for the new procedures, and encouraged everyone to ensure that asbestos products are handled in strict compliance with the provisions now in place.

Stephanie V Jack
Minister for the Environment, Education and Social Welfare

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