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12 August 2016

Circular to parish priests and principals of Catholic schools in Victoria

Identification and Management of Asbestos in Workplaces

Main Points

- It is a legal requirement for schools to comply with the relevant legislation on the management of asbestos.
- WorkSafe Victoria has commenced a project that involves targeted inspections in the education sector, addressing the identification and management of asbestos-containing materials in buildings, plant and structures (in-situ asbestos). Many buildings constructed prior to 1990 contain asbestos materials. Some asbestos-containing materials may have been used after this date also. Building owners and those with management control (this includes school principals and parish priests) have responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007* to manage any asbestos in their school by:
 - ensuring all asbestos has been clearly identified by a competent asbestos consultant and keeping a hardcopy of the asbestos audit report easily accessible
 - providing an up-to-date version of the asbestos register for staff and contractors (e.g. electricians, plumbers, maintenance staff, builders, painters, carpenters) before undertaking any work in the school:
 - The asbestos register should be kept in a readily accessible location such as the reception area of the school.
 - labelling identified asbestos to clearly indicate its presence and location. If reasonably practicable, this should be done by either:
 - direct labelling (if safe to do so) is preferred and the most effective
 - colour-coded labelling – this is less effective and requires clear communication with employees and contractors.
 - reviewing and updating the asbestos register every five years (even if there have been no changes) – or earlier, if asbestos products have been removed, enclosed, sealed or additional products discovered.

Critical Dates

- Worksafe has commenced targeted inspections in schools across the state. Employers and principals must take immediate steps to ensure they are managing asbestos in accordance with the above.

Actions Required

- Principals are asked to ensure all asbestos has been identified by an asbestos consultant.
- All schools with asbestos must ensure they have an up-to-date asbestos register.
- Where asbestos has been identified, its presence and location must be clearly indicated by labelling (where reasonably practicable).

Additional Information

- Information on [labelling asbestos in workplaces](#) is available from the WorkSafe website.

Contact/Enquiries

- For further information about asbestos registers and labelling please contact the Industrial Relations Unit on 03 9267 0228 or ohs@cem.edu.au.
- For all other enquiries please contact the relevant diocesan contact:
 - Melbourne – Mr Harry Allard on 03 9267 0228 or hallard@cem.edu.au
 - Ballarat – Mr Brad Carr on 03 5337 7135 or bcarr@ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au
 - Sale – Mr Paul Velten on 03 5622 6600 or pvelten@ceosale.catholic.edu.au
 - Sandhurst – Mr Kevin Lawlor on 03 5443 2377 or klawlor@ceosand.catholic.edu.au.



Stephen Elder
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR