



## ASBESTOS CONTAMINATION IN POWERED ACCESS EQUIPMENT TOOLBOX TALK

This Toolbox Talk provides guidance for powered access rental companies on how to deal with suspected asbestos contaminated equipment when it is off-rent.

Powered access equipment can sometimes work in hazardous environments such as refurbishment, building maintenance and demolition. Asbestos can be present in these types of workplaces and can contaminate clothing and equipment. When this equipment is off-rent, there is the potential for it to be returned to the rental company in a contaminated condition.

### WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral composed of flexible fibers that are resistant to heat, electricity, and corrosion. Asbestos is commonly used in building materials and is extremely fibrous, if inhaled these fibers can become trapped in the lungs. Exposure to asbestos increases the risk of developing cancers in the lungs and the latency period can sometimes be decades after initial exposure.

### There are three main types of asbestos:

- Chrysotile (white)
- Amosite (brown)
- Crocidolite (blue)

### WHAT SHOULD A RENTAL COMPANY HAVE IN PLACE TO CONTROL THE RISK OF EXPOSURE?

- Provision in the rental agreement requiring the renter to protect and/or clean equipment prior to return.
- A responsible person in charge of asbestos management.
- Specific procedures to follow if asbestos is suspected to be present on equipment on site, or after it has been off-rent and returned to the depot.

### MINIMISING THE RISK:

- Train staff to recognise asbestos and the procedures to follow if they think equipment may be contaminated. This includes delivery drivers, workshop/service technicians and yard staff.
- Consider asbestos awareness training for staff.

### WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

This TBT applies to all individuals involved in the powered access industry, including:

- Rental company managers, supervisors, technicians/engineers.
- Delivery drivers and field service technicians.

### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RENTER/USER

The responsibility for keeping powered access equipment clear of asbestos while on rent is the renter of the equipment. If equipment is contaminated with asbestos, the renter will need to arrange for it to be cleaned and a clean certificate issued to the rental company verifying that it has been cleaned by a licensed/certified asbestos abatement contractor.

### WHAT A RENTAL COMPANY SHOULD DO IF POWERED ACCESS EQUIPMENT IS SUSPECTED TO BE CONTAMINATED WITH ASBESTOS

- If delivery drivers suspect asbestos is present on an off-rent MEWP on-site, they should not collect it. They should report the issue to the hirer and inform the MEWP rental company of the suspected contamination.
- Assume it is asbestos and test sample to confirm.
- Require hirer/renter to provide proof that the equipment is clean.
- If not clean, it will require removal of the asbestos by a licensed contractor and require proof of completion prior to pick up.
- If potential contamination is discovered after pick up, use signage and store in a segregated area. It is recommended to enclose the equipment with poly until asbestos can be abated.

### NEVER:

- Attempt to wash or clean off equipment that may be contaminated with asbestos with a high-pressure washer or airline.
- Clean air filters with a compressed airline.
- Sweep a workshop floor if you think an asbestos-contaminated equipment has been parked there.
- Never take asbestos-contaminated clothing home.

### REMEMBER:

- Exposure to asbestos could affect you in later life. It can cause asbestosis, lung cancer or mesothelioma.
- Always protect yourself and others around you.
- Always keep up to date with any changes with the management of asbestos in your region.

### USEFUL REFERENCES

- International Labour Organisation (ILO) – [Occupational health: Asbestos](#)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) – [Asbestos Guidance](#)