

Safety Alert

Check for asbestos damage after severe weather event

The purpose of this Safety Alert is to urge commercial property owners and managers to check known asbestos containing material (ACM) in their properties for damage after a severe weather event, such as a cyclone.

Background

Fragments of ACM were found outside a commercial building in Darwin after it was damaged during Cyclone Fina.

Although workers inspected the building for cyclone damage, they overlooked the ACM outside. It remained there for several days before being removed. Delaying the cleanup may allow further damage to the fragments potentially releasing harmful asbestos fibres.



Image: Small pieces (fragments) of ACM at the entrance of a building's carpark.

Possible contributing factors

- ACM in existing buildings are now 30 years or older, and this aging material could be deteriorating.
- Severe weather events, like a cyclone can damage ACM, especially if the ACM is located on the outside of the building.

- The workers who checked for damage to the building were not specifically looking for damage to ACM.

Action required

- Commercial property owners should conduct visual inspections on ACM in their property after severe weather events, such as a cyclone.
 - Provide a copy of the building's asbestos register to workers so they are aware of the location of the buildings ACM and what damage to look for after a severe weather event.
 - Provide asbestos awareness training to workers who would be involved in the identification of debris and clean up after a severe weather event.
- Take appropriate action to manage damaged ACM as detailed in your asbestos management plan.

Further information

For further information, please refer to the following:

Guide

- [Guide to Asbestos Management](#)

Codes of Practice

- [How to manage and control asbestos in the workplace](#)
- [How to safely remove asbestos](#)

Web pages

- [Licensed asbestos removalists](#)
- [Licensed asbestos assessors](#)

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