

ASBESTOS-RELATED WORK: BEARDS AND FACIAL HAIR

Asbestos-related work means work involving asbestos, other than asbestos removal work, that is permitted under the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017*, such as maintenance work that involves disturbing asbestos. Workers undertaking asbestos-related work must wear respiratory protective equipment (respirators).

The performance of respirators is dependent on how well the respirator prevents the user from respiring (breathing in) asbestos fibers. The performance of a respirator is determined by a fit test*.

Where beards or facial hair are present most respirators will not be suitable as they fail the fit test requirements.

Where workers are unable to be clean shaven, a suitable alternate form of respirator must be provided and used. If this is not possible the worker must not perform that work until suitable controls can be put in place.

The **Code of Practice: How to safely remove asbestos** states that workers with beards, stubble or facial hair should only use a **continuous-flow positive pressure respirator**. Specific detailed information on respiratory protective equipment requirements for asbestos can be found in the *Code of Practice How to Safely Remove Asbestos*.



Full-face, positive pressure demand air-line respirator

*A fit test should be performed to assist in determining the respirator with the best fit and performance for the individual worker immediately before commencing work, and a fit check performed each time the respirator is to be used. All respirator fit tests must be done in accordance with AS/NZS 1715:2009: *Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment* and the manufacturer's instructions.

Further information

For further information on personal protective equipment for workers, please contact SafeWork NSW:

SafeWork Information Centre



SafeWork NSW 13 10 50



www.safework.nsw.gov.au

Disclaimer

This information should be read in conjunction with relevant legislation, guidelines and codes of practice. In the case of any discrepancies, the most recent legislation should prevail. This information does not constitute legal advice. Legal advice should be sought in relation to specific circumstances and liability will not be accepted for losses incurred as a result of reliance on this information.

The information in this guide has been extracted from the Code of Practice How to Safely Remove Asbestos to assist councils.