

prensa update

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NSW approach to managing asbestos in or on soil

Recent guidance has been published by the NSW Heads of Asbestos Coordinating Authorities (HACA) to provide a 'whole of government approach' general direction on the assessment and management of asbestos in soil. The guidance document is titled ***Managing asbestos in or on soil: Guide (March 2014)***.

The publication can be downloaded using this hyperlink:

<http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/formspublications/publications/pages/asbestos-in-soil-guide.aspx>

Asbestos in soil has health and financial implications for the current and future occupants of land and for workers employed on a site. The new guidance applies principally to the legacy of poor historical on-site management of asbestos containing materials and not to the illegal disposal or landfilling of waste generated off-site, which is discussed overleaf.



The guide provides an overarching flow chart for dealing with surface (0-10 cm depth), near surface (0.1-0.5 m depth) and deeper asbestos in soil.

Detailed guidance relating to site investigation and on-site management of asbestos in soil is published in the National Environmental Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure Amendment No. 1 (ASC NEPM 2013).

The ASC NEPM 2013 approach has been largely based on WA Health's Guidelines for the assessment, remediation and management of asbestos-contaminated sites in Western Australia (May 2009).

NSW Waste Framework and Asbestos

A different approach to on-site management has been adopted for asbestos waste, as detailed in the NSW waste framework (Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act 1997, POEO (Waste) Regulation 2005 and Waste Classification Guidelines 2009), which stipulates that asbestos waste in any form must be disposed of only to a landfill site that may lawfully receive the waste. Furthermore, a person must not cause or permit asbestos waste in any form to be reused or recycled.



The existing POEO (Waste) Regulation 2005 is due for staged repeal on 01/09/2014. This will be replaced by the proposed POEO (Waste) Regulation 2014, which is in draft and was recently under public consultation.

Based on recent advice from NSW EPA's Waste Strategy Unit, new guidance is also in draft for dealing with asbestos in soil as 'waste' when the material is due to be removed off-site. In summary, asbestos containing material (ACM) impacted soil can either be classified as containing asbestos OR the '**inspection and segregation method**' should be implemented.

This method comprises the inspection and segregation of soil into discrete, uniform stockpiles, then spread out to a maximum 100 mm thickness and visually inspected, then validated. If ACM is visually observed within a stockpile, the soil must be classified and disposed off-site as *Special Waste-Asbestos Waste*.

If asbestos is not visually observed within a stockpile, the soil should be then be sampled and analysed for asbestos fibres in accordance with Australian Standard AS-4964-2004. Under NATA's accreditation the laboratory reporting limit is 0.1 g/kg, by polarised light microscopy including dispersion staining.

If the analysis confirms the portion of soil is below the limit of detection, then the soil may be classified as not containing asbestos and disposed off-site in accordance with the Waste Classification Guidelines 2009.