

Asbestos sampling process.

A **competent person** should take the following steps to carry out sampling:

Step 1—Preparation

- Make sure no one else is in the vicinity when sampling is done.
- Shut down any heating or cooling systems to minimise the spread of any released fibres.
- Turn off any fans if you're inside. If outside, then sample on a non-windy day.
- Do not disturb the material any more than is needed to take a small sample.
- Collect the equipment you will need for sampling, including:
 - pliers, resealable plastic bags, disposable coveralls, waterproof sealant, plastic drop sheet, water spray bottle, labelled heavy duty plastic (200 µm polyethylene) asbestos waste disposal bags
 - P2 respirator, rubber gloves.

Step 2—Taking the sample

- Wear disposable gloves.
- Put on respiratory protective equipment (RPE).
- Wear a pair of disposable coveralls.
- Lay down a plastic drop sheet to catch any loose material that may fall off while sampling.
- Wet the material using a fine mist of water containing a few drops of detergent before taking the sample. The water/detergent mist will reduce the release of asbestos fibres.
- Carefully cut a thumbnail piece from the entire depth of the material using the pliers.
- For fibre cement sheeting, take the sample from a corner edge or along an existing hole or crack.
- Place the small piece into the resealable plastic bag.
- Double bag the sample, include the date and location and an asbestos caution warning.
- Tightly seal the container after the sample is in it.
- Use a damp paper towel or rag to clean up any material on the outside of the container or around the area sampled.
- Patch the sampled area with the smallest possible piece of duct tape to prevent fibre release.
- Send the sample to a NATA-accredited laboratory or one that is either approved or operated by the relevant regulator.

Step 3—Cleaning up

- Seal the edges with waterproof sealant where the sample was taken.
- Carefully wrap up the plastic drop sheet with adhesive (cloth or duct) tape and then put this into a labelled heavy duty plastic asbestos waste disposal bag.
- Wipe down the tools and equipment with a dampened rag.
- Place disposable gloves and coveralls into labelled heavy duty plastic asbestos waste disposal bag, along with the damp rag and drop sheet.
- Seal the plastic bag and then place it in another labelled heavy duty plastic asbestos waste disposal bag (i.e. double bag).
- Wash hands.
- Keep RPE on until clean-up is completed.
- Follow a decontamination procedure (personal washing) and wash RPE upon completion of the task.
- Store non-disposable RPE in a sealed and labelled container or dispose of the RPE as asbestos waste.
- Dispose of asbestos materials according to state or territory and local procedures.

Source: Safe Work Australia 'How to manage and control asbestos in the workplace' Code of Practice (Appendix B)
<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-how-manage-and-control-asbestos-workplace>