



Asbestos in the Penrose Old Control Building

WHAT HAPPENED?

During site investigations for a seismic upgrading project of the Penrose Substation Old Control Building, loose and broken fibrolite type sheeting containing asbestos was identified lying in the ceiling space of the control room.



IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN

- Access to the Old Control Building was restricted and signage installed. Entry required authorisation, PPE training and compliant asbestos PPE.
- Samples were gathered by a registered asbestos company and sent to a certified laboratory for testing. Results confirmed that the material located in the ceiling space contained Chrysotile asbestos. The site was further tested to determine the extent of contamination.
- An investigation was initiated to identify root causes.
- An asbestos expert was also engaged to support staff and management (including staff of Service Provider companies) to understand hazard/risk levels and potential exposure. She also met with affected staff to discuss concerns and provide a factual report for staff.

ROOT CAUSE

It is understood that the asbestos containing material located in the ceiling space had been there for approximately 20-40 years. It appears the broken pieces were left behind when the original roof was replaced. Due to ceiling vents in the control room and a roof vent into the ceiling space, some asbestos fibres have entered the control room area during certain weather conditions.

LEARNINGS

- All Transpower staff and Service Providers must be vigilant for potential asbestos containing materials.
- Report suspected asbestos containing material to your Supervisor/Manager and Transpower Manager so it can be tested, and removed or managed in accordance with legislative requirements. See also the guidelines for the management and removal of asbestos (available on the Worksafe website).
- Dust from other products can be also be hazardous to your health (e.g. silica from building products, or fibreglass). Ensure correct PPE is used for potentially dusty environments, including roof spaces.
- If you have worked at the Penrose site and are concerned about your exposure to asbestos, contact PeopleDirect@transpower.co.nz for information on the Transpower screening programme.



For more information,
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