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Asbestos removal licence suspended

Friday 12 November 2004

NT WorkSafe today banned a licensed asbestos removalist from operating in the Northern Territory for three months.

It is believed to be the first time such a suspension has been invoked.

NT WorkSafe Director Mark Crossin also announced new asbestos licensing arrangements were likely to come into effect across Australia by mid-2005.

Mr Crossin said the suspension only applies to the individual and not the company he works for.

The ban begins on Monday 15 November 2004 and continues until close of business on 15 February 2005.

"The removalist did not demonstrate a best-practice approach to asbestos removal principles in relation to this project," Mr Crossin said. "NT WorkSafe regards this as a serious matter."

Mr Crossin said a proposed new Asbestos National Standard and Code of Practice was being developed and expected to come into effect by mid-2005.

"NT WorkSafe is developing new requirements for asbestos licences in accordance with this," he said.

"After consultation with industry it is expected that new licensing arrangements will apply to all holders of asbestos licences within the Northern Territory by mid-2005."

Mr Crossin said he wished to emphasise: "NT WorkSafe will continue to monitor asbestos removal activities through the notification process."

He added: "I would remind all Territorians who have any concerns about the removal of asbestos, particularly in the workplace, to contact NT WorkSafe."

"We are working with industry to establish a register for people who think they may have been affected by asbestos. Details are yet to be finalised and will be announced in due course."

"Safety information about asbestos is available on our website, www.worksafe.nt.gov.au."

Working party meets on asbestos exposure

Wednesday 17 November 2004

NT WorkSafe today held discussions with a broad range of industry, union and government agencies on the setting up of an asbestos exposure register for people who think they may have been exposed to asbestos fibres in the Northern Territory.

The working party included members of the Territory Construction Association, the Housing Industry Association, Indigenous Housing Association of the NT, Unions NT, and health and environmental health representatives.

NT WorkSafe Director Mark Crossin said the group had been formed amid public concern about possible exposure to asbestos fibres.

"Our initial inquiries to other jurisdictions indicate that there are very few similar asbestos exposure registers interstate," Mr Crossin said. "We will be conducting detailed research on the viability and relevance of these registers before a decision is made for the Territory.

"The working party is expected to meet again in about a month's time."

Mr Crossin said anybody who believed they had been exposed to asbestos fibres in the workplace should lodge a workers' compensation claim.

"Members of the public who also think they may have been exposed to asbestos fibres should contact NT WorkSafe in the interim."

Safety advice on the use of asbestos can be found on the NT WorkSafe website, www.worksafe.nt.gov.au

Mr Crossin said the asbestos exposure register working party was a separate body from the Joint Review Team, under the chairmanship of Mr David Rolfe of the Department of the Chief Minister, which is conducting a review of asbestos registers of schools and other government buildings.

The Hon Syd Stirling, MLA, Minister for Employment, Education and Training announced the Joint Review Team earlier this month.