

## TAKING A SAMPLE FOR ASBESTOS TESTING

Sampling and laboratory testing is the only conclusive method of identifying the presence of asbestos in building materials. Care needs to be taken when sampling to prevent creating any dust, which may contain asbestos fibres.

### Step 1 – Preparation

- Make sure no one else is in the vicinity when sampling is done.
- Collect the equipment you will need for sampling, including: pliers, scissors, craft knife or scraper (depending on what material is being tested), resealable plastic bags, disposable gloves, baby wipes, disposable dust mask, water spray bottle, plastic sheeting.

### Step 2 – Taking the sample

- Put on disposable gloves and dust mask.
- Wet the material to be sampled 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.
- If you are taking more than one sample, please wash your hands and any equipment used between samples to avoid cross-contamination of the samples.
- **For linoleum/vinyl floor covering**, carefully cut a thumb nail piece from the entire depth of the material using scissors or craft knife. Make sure you get all the backing with the sample.
- **For cement-based sheeting**, find an area that has been damaged or is in a discrete place. Use a baby wipe in your pliers and break off a portion of the sheeting the size of a 50 cent piece.
- **For textured ceilings**, find an area that has been damaged or take from a discreet area, such as under a light shade, smoke alarm, or in the corner of the room. Plastic sheeting can be placed on the floor underneath where you are sampling to catch any material that may be dropped. Gently scrape a tablespoon full of the textured material off the ceiling with a flat scraper into a bag. Make sure the 'pimply' or textured part of the plaster is included. You should do this in 3-5 different areas of the material you'd like tested. It is okay to combine rooms but if the material looks different it should be sampled separately. Do not sample the gib underneath the textured material.
- **Place the sample into the resealable plastic bag and seal tightly.**
- Write the date, your name and address and the location of the sample on the bag.

### Step 3 – Cleaning up

- Wipe down the tools and equipment with a dampened rag.
- If any material drops on the carpet or floor, DO NOT VACUUM or SWEEP. Clean up all debris with a damp cloth. Carefully roll up plastic sheeting (if used).
- Place plastic sheeting, cleaning cloths, disposable gloves and mask into a rubbish bag and seal well. Dispose of in the household waste.
- Wash hands well afterwards.
- Send or deliver the sample to the Public Health Service.

The sample/s is sent away to a laboratory in Lower Hutt for testing. Results normally take around 7 working days, but sometimes longer. You will be provided with a written copy of the analysis and advice on what to do next.

**Note: This free service is not available for commercial or health and safety reasons or when sale and purchase of a house is involved. In these situations, we recommend contacting an accredited asbestos testing laboratory listed on Google or the Yellow Pages.**

If you have any queries, please contact a Health Protection Officer at:

- **Public Health Unit, Palmerston North** Ph: **06 350 9110**
- **Public Health Centre, Whanganui** Ph: **06 348 1775**

