WORKSAFE
Mahi Haumaru Aotearoa

8 September 2025

WorkSafe is providing this information in relation to the presence of asbestos in certain fire safety doors

WorkSafe was notified of a potential health risk involving imported materials, which may contain asbestos, used in the production of fire safety doors.

Background

In response, we commenced a targeted health and safety response in parallel with a cross-agency response being coordinated by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

WorkSafe inspectors initially conducted urgent assessments at two companies — one of which was Pacific Door Systems Ltd (PDS). As a result, PDS sites in Wellington and Timaru were closed temporarily while they safely removed any asbestos-containing material and have since received independent clearance certificates and deemed safe for workers to return. Since then, we have conducted a number of site visits with different companies where we have been notified of similar concerns.

Note: WorkSafe has been made aware of a Brisbane-based company, Firemex, that has supplied asbestos-contaminated fire doors directly into New Zealand. We are also looking into reports of further suppliers of asbestos-containing materials relating to fire safety doors. We are engaging with relevant parties and MBIE to ensure we give them health and safety advice.*

As the work health and safety regulator, WorkSafe's role is to influence businesses and workers to ensure their work is healthy and safe. We also work with businesses and organisations to ensure they understand their obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and, in this context, relevant asbestos regulations.

Following our initial health and safety response, WorkSafe is providing the following information for businesses on safe practices for identifying, installing, and disposal of asbestos, along with health advice for organisations and individuals concerned about potential exposure. You can also refer to our Q&As on this issue.

If you have further questions relating to this issue, please contact technicall@worksafe.govt.nz

To notify us of any unsafe work, please reach out via Notify WorkSafe on our website, email HandSconcerns@worksafe.govt.nz or call **0800 030 040.**

WorkSafe position on further sampling/ testing on fire doors

Enhanced analytical testing, utilising Polarised Light Microscopy with Dispersion Staining (PLM/DS) followed by Transmission Electron Microscopy with Energy Dispersive Spectroscopy and Selected Area Electron Diffraction (TEM/EDS/SAED), has confirmed the presence of asbestos in the FRB core board used in these fire doors. No consistent pattern has been established in relation to manufacturing batch, production year, or other traceable variables.

Given this uncertainty, and in recognition of the critical role these doors play in passive fire protection, WorkSafe advises against further sampling in premises where fire doors are already fully installed. Additional invasive testing may compromise the fire integrity of the doors and introduce unnecessary safety risks.

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Operating premises where these doors are already installed must adopt a blanket asbestos presence presumption for asbestos risk management purposes. Asbestos registers and asbestos management plans (AMPs) must be updated accordingly or created for premises that previously had no asbestos present.

WorkSafe is aware that this blanket presumption is generating contractual complexities across active construction projects, and that contracting chains are considering further testing.

At this point and based on current evidence, WorkSafe's position is that **standard asbestos sampling strategies** (including archetype asbestos content classification based on sampling/testing proportion of core board within a batch of fire doors) and standard PLM/DS testing are insufficient to rule out the presence of asbestos in the FRB core board.

Until a tailored sampling and testing protocol is finalised (currently under development by Assa Abloy and their appointed asbestos consultants in NZ), any attempt to rule out the presence of asbestos in the FRB core board in individual doors will need to be sampled and subjected to TEM/EDS/SAED testing.

Due to the composition of the FRB core board (chrysotile and sepiolite presence confirmed), TEM/XRD testing alone is not considered sufficient.

Identification, installation and disposal of fire safety doors

- **Product identification:** until further notice, fire doors supplied by Pacific Doors between 1 March 2021 and 11 August 2025** and listed on MBIE's Product Recall page must be presumed to contain asbestos. Contact Pacific Doors for further details regarding product identification at this time.
- Fire doors supplied by Firemex between 2021 and 2025 are presumed to have asbestos in the core unless confirmed otherwise. If you have received potentially affected products during this period, contact Firemex for further details regarding product identification and take note of this advice pack.
- **Installation prohibition:** further installation of these fire doors, including hardware fitting, is strictly prohibited under Regulation 7 of the Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016.
- **Risk assessment:** If fire doors remain intact, they pose negligible to no risk of asbestos exposure. However, if the door is designed and installed in a way that exposes the fire door core***, or if the damage to the door is more than cosmetic wear (for example, not just bumps and scratches) and exposes the fire door core, immediate remediation must be undertaken in accordance with your organisation's Asbestos Management Plan (AMP).
- **Installed doors:** All premises with these doors installed must adopt a blanket presumption of asbestos presence for risk management purposes. Asbestos registers and AMPs must be updated or created for premises that previously had no asbestos present.
- **Uninstalled stock:** Any uninstalled fire doors from this supply period must be quarantined and disposed of as asbestos waste, in line with your organisation's AMP
- **Voluntary recall:** MBIE has advised that PDS has issued a voluntary recall of potentially asbestos impacted fire doors – further information is on their website

Health advice

Organisations and individuals concerned about potential asbestos exposure should consult an Occupational Medicine Physician or equivalent specialist. These professionals are best equipped to assess, educate, and support workers who may have been exposed to asbestos-related health risks.

For further guidance, we recommend the following resources:

- Occupational Medicine Experts – Work & Health – New Zealand | Healthpages
- Find an Occupational Health & Wellbeing Professional – Australian and New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine
- Exposure monitoring and health monitoring – guidance for businesses

Q&A

Is the asbestos containing material within the affected doors considered to be friable (Class A) or Non-Friable (Class B)?

The core board in these fire doors is friable, which means these materials can easily crumble and release dangerous airborne fibres. Provided that no core board is exposed, the affected doors can be removed under Class B controls by a Class A asbestos removalist.

Doors that are damaged with the core board potentially or actually exposed must be removed under Class A controls by Class A asbestos removalist.

WorkSafe recommends consulting a licenced asbestos assessor who can determine the appropriate class of asbestos removal before any removal work is done.

If the doors are to be removed intact, with all installed hardware still attached, clearly labelled and disposed of as asbestos waste, does this need to be done by a licensed asbestos removalist?

Yes. A licensed asbestos removalist must carry out the work if **five or more doors are to be removed cumulatively across the site.**

If four or fewer doors are being removed (equivalent to 10m2 of asbestos containing material), this work can be done by a competent person trained in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016.

Dividing the removal work across the site into smaller projects of four or fewer doors to circumvent regulations is prohibited.

Should WorkSafe be notified before the removal process begins?

Yes. WorkSafe should be notified five days before starting the removal process if five or more doors will be removed from the site.

WorkSafe doesn't have to be notified if four or fewer doors are to be removed during the entire process.

Dividing the removal work into smaller projects of four or fewer doors to circumvent regulations and to avoid notifying WorkSafe is prohibited.

Are the doors required to be wrapped in 200µm polyethylene for disposal, and labelled as containing asbestos?

Yes. All regulatory requirements for handling asbestos waste – including sealing, marking and disposal – apply when removing the affected doors.

* Updated 23 September 2025 based on latest information

** Updated 12 September to clarify the inclusive date

*** Updated 30 September to cover situations when fire door core is exposed