

Fact Sheet

Asbestos cement pipe management at SA Water depots

SA Water operates a large network across South Australia – of which around 42 per cent is made of cement pipes that contains bonded, non-friable asbestos.

Asbestos cement pipes are widely used for water supply throughout Australia and across the world.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and National Health and Medical Research Council's Australian Drinking Water Guidelines confirm presence of asbestos cement pipes within water networks does not pose a public health risk.

You can read more on this topic in fact sheets from [WHO](#) and the [Water Services Association of Australia](#).

At times, sections of asbestos cement pipe need to be removed to allow for repairs of water supply infrastructure.



Photo 1: Asbestos cement pipe

SA Water is licensed by Safe Work SA to remove Class B asbestos (non-friable) and our staff who work with this material are specially trained to ensure both their safety and public safety.

When sections of these pipes are removed from the network, they are double-wrapped and temporarily held in designated storage bins on secure sites not accessible to the public, before being removed and disposed of by a licensed contractor at a licenced waste handling facility.



Photo 2: Double-wrapped asbestos material for temporary storage and disposal

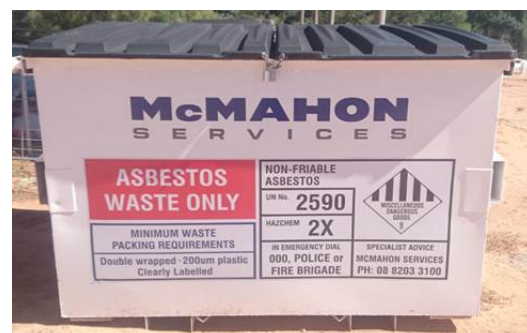


Photo 3: A temporary storage bin for asbestos containing material at an SA Water facility

This is in accordance with the Australian Code of Practice for Managing Asbestos Containing Material and the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 and associated regulations.

Repairs to these pipes can occur any time day or night and can often be a long way from an appropriate disposal facility.

Temporarily holding them at our depots means they are kept safe until they can be permanently disposed of at a licensed facility.

Recently, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) clarified that SA Water depots which temporarily store asbestos must be licenced as 'waste recycling depots' under the Environment Protection Act 1993.

Following this clarification, SA Water has applied for 'waste recycling depot' licences at 31 of its depots across the state.

The application for sites to become licenced with the EPA formalises existing and longstanding practices for temporary storage of asbestos at these locations.

SA Water does not, and is not proposing to undertake any asbestos processing, or any change to our existing practices.

Importantly, the EPA has confirmed our existing safe practices do not represent a risk to workers, the public or the environment.

More information

If you would like more information on asbestos management at SA Water depots, please contact the SA Water Stakeholder Engagement team on 7424 2806 or at project@sawater.com.au