

Asbestos was commonly used in the building industry prior to 1988 and if your home was built before this time your electrical meter board may contain bonded asbestos.

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that was used in many industries because of its resistance to fire, heat, electrical and chemical damage. It was banned from use in all forms in 2003.

## How do I know if my meter board contains asbestos?

If your meter board has been identified as possibly containing asbestos a caution sticker such as this may have been placed on the board or inside your meter box.



Asbestos meter boards were manufactured under several names - *Lebah*, *Ausbestos*, and *Zelimite* - and are classified as bonded asbestos. If products containing bonded asbestos are maintained in good order they do not present a significant health risk<sup>(1)</sup>, nevertheless, safety precautions must be taken when working on any product containing asbestos.

## Working on the meter board

If inadequate control measures are implemented, health risks such as lung cancer, mesothelioma, or asbestosis can arise from the inhalation of airborne asbestos fibres.

When working on meter boards containing bonded asbestos, or suspected of containing asbestos, Essential Energy adheres to strict safety procedures to manage the risk of any potential exposure to our employees and the home owner.

Depending on the task, these controls may include:

(Note an appropriate asbestos vacuum cleaner should be used that complies with Class H requirements of AS/NZS 60335.2.69 *Industrial vacuum cleaners*)

- > Barricading off the work area and wearing the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) –

including a P2 rated respirator and disposable coveralls

- > Decontaminating the board by vacuuming any identified dust before the work is commenced
- > Using a vacuum and attachments to capture any dust or swarf from drilling while the work is carried out
- > Thoroughly vacuuming and wiping down the meter board, cabinet and surrounding area upon completion of the work, to ensure that all fibres are removed
- > Decontaminating all PPE and tools prior to leaving the site and appropriately disposing of all used PPE, rags, etc, as asbestos waste.

**Your safety is important** - do not conduct any work on your meter board unless you hold the relevant electrical qualifications.

When employing an electrical contractor to work on your meter board, ensure they are aware that the board may potentially contain asbestos, discuss the work that is required to be performed and how they will manage the potential risk of asbestos exposure.

You should be satisfied that the electrical contractor will put in place the correct controls to manage any potential risk to yourself or your family prior to commencing work.

## Replacing the meter board

Meter boards are the property of the owner of the premises.

If you are concerned about asbestos in your meter board, or wish to replace it, you should contact an accredited asbestos removal professional or electrical contractor.



**Further information on asbestos can be obtained from the SafeWork NSW website [safework.nsw.gov.au](http://safework.nsw.gov.au)**

<sup>(1)</sup> WorkCover NSW: Working with Asbestos, Guide 2008

*Be safe, because they need you*

