

Zero Tolerance to Asbestos

An Australia-wide ban on the manufacture and use of all types of asbestos and asbestos containing material (ACM) took effect on 31 December 2003. In order to support the domestic ban, asbestos or ACM imports to, and exports from Australia are prohibited, unless permitted by the relevant Minister.

It is the responsibility of importers and exporters to ensure they do not import, or export prohibited goods, such as asbestos. It is critical that importers/exporters comply with the regulations and ensure that goods they are purchasing do not contain any level of asbestos.

Importers/exporters should ensure their supply chain security by confirming that asbestos was not used to manufacture the goods. Importers should organise sampling and testing for asbestos content prior to shipping the goods to Australia and undertake regular risk assessments and quality assurance processes.

Importers/exporters must provide documentation that provides sufficient assurance. Brokers should be aware that their clients must provide this documentation. If the Australian Border Force (ABF) suspects that goods contain asbestos, these goods will be detained at the border and examined.

Certification of samples tested inside Australia must be from a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratory. Certification of samples tested outside Australia must be from a testing laboratory that is accredited by a NATA recognised equivalent authority. The ABF will not accept any other certification.

If sufficient documentation cannot be supplied, then the importer could be required to arrange sampling, testing and certification by a 'competent person' to ensure there is no presence of asbestos. The cost of any independent inspection, testing and storage of the goods is the responsibility of the importer/exporter.

If unauthorised asbestos is found to have entered Australia, the importer of the goods may be subject to penalties or prosecution.

More detailed information on asbestos is available at: Border.gov.au and asbestossafety.gov.au