



Consultation on a Proposed Prohibition on the Importation of Asbestos-containing Products

The Government is currently considering making regulations to prohibit the importation of asbestos-containing products (ACPs) into New Zealand.

As part of this process, the Ministry for the Environment is carrying out targeted consultation with industry groups and businesses that we understand may be currently using ACPs and may therefore be directly affected by a prohibition. We are seeking your feedback on the likely impact of a prohibition on your business or industry.

Asbestos is a recognised carcinogen, poses risks of respiratory disease and is a leading cause of work-related disease and mortality. In recognition of this risk, importing raw asbestos into New Zealand is not permitted under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. However this restriction does not extend to ACPs.

A prohibition would only impact on products being imported into the country. Existing products and structures that may contain asbestos would not be affected. The risks posed by existing ACPs would continue to be managed by existing legislation, primarily through Health and Safety in Employment (Asbestos) Regulations 1998¹.

In 2014 the Ministry for the Environment commissioned research into New Zealand's import and export of ACPs (the report can be found on the Ministry's website: <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/hazards/inventory-new-zealand-imports-and-exports-asbestos-containing-products>). This research indicated that only small volumes of ACPs are being imported into New Zealand and that there are viable non-asbestos alternatives for most products. However there were reports of ACP use in the marine, aviation and electricity generation and supply industries.

The Ministry is now seeking further information from those who have indicated that they have ongoing use for ACPs, in order to gain a fuller picture of the impact that a prohibition might have. Specifically, we are looking for feedback on:

1. the volume of ACPs being imported by individual businesses;
2. the specific products that are being imported;
3. how necessary these products are to industry;
4. the availability of non-asbestos alternative products; and
5. the cost of alternative products, compared to ACPs currently being imported or used.

Please provide information on the points above as they relate to your business.

¹ Note that these regulations are currently being revised as part of the ongoing health and safety reforms. Details can be found at: <http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/employment-skills/workplace-health-and-safety-reform/development-of-regulations-to-support-the-new-health-and-safety-at-work-act>



This information will be used to inform the Government's decisions on whether to proceed with a prohibition on ACPs and, if so, on how this prohibition would be implemented. The more feedback that is provided will enable the Ministry to establish a more complete picture of the overall impact of a prohibition and allow for the Government to make a more fully informed decision.

Please provide your feedback **by 30 September 2015** to:

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