

Asbestos samples in mineral kits

This safety alert supersedes previous Mineral kit safety alerts.

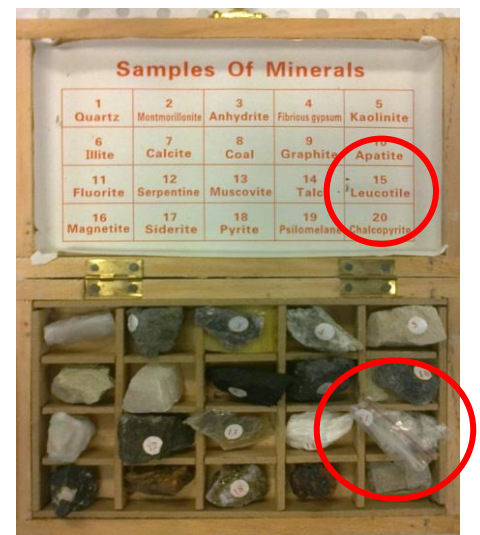
- **In March 2023 a mineral kit containing a fibrous asbestos sample was found in storage** at a school. The kit contained a specimen of asbestos in the form of a naturally occurring fibrous mineral. The whole kit was collected and disposed of.

The department has previously been alerted to the presence of asbestos rock samples contained in some imported 'mineral kits' purchased by schools. Processes, including product recalls, have been implemented to withdraw these from use.



Example of a kit found in storage in 2023 that contains a sample of fibrous

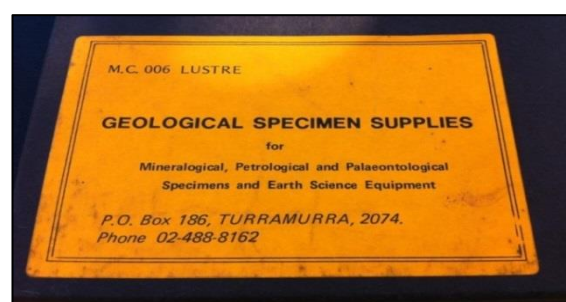
- **In July 2014 all schools were advised of a supplier recall for kits containing a sample labelled as 'leucotile'**– the schools identified as having purchased these kits were contacted by the department, with suppliers managing the recall process directly with schools. The whole kit was recalled; not just the leucotile sample.
- **Schools were also reminded at this time to immediately withdraw entire kits from use that were purchased prior to 2011 and safely dispose of them.**
- **In March 2011 all schools were advised to dispose of a range of mineral kits, ore and geological kits which contained samples of asbestos including tremolite, actinolite and serpentine.**



Example of a kit containing Leucotile stored in a zip lock bag. Leucotile is an uncommon synonym for asbestos.



Example of a post-March 2011 kit found to contain a sample of serpentine.



Example of a pre-March 2011 kit containing samples including asbestos, serpentine, tremolite and actinolite.

Why are these minerals of concern?

Asbestos may be present in many geological samples in varying physical forms. Health concerns associated with asbestos exposure are related to the inhalation (breathing in) of fibres. This can only occur if the asbestos containing rock is fibrous, easily crumbled or broken apart (friable); or if it is present as dust.

Table 1 includes fibrous and/or friable forms of asbestos minerals and the chrysotile polymorphs (different forms) of serpentine. **Samples of these types are NOT to be purchased or retained.** Whilst the risk of the presence of 'fibrous' or 'friable' asbestos fibres is very low in most of these samples, and the risk of exposure is negligible from non-fibrous forms, the department is committed to moving towards an asbestos free environment.

Table 1: Names of asbestos-containing geological samples that are to be excluded from purchase.

Asbestos	Chrysotile (leucotile/white asbestos/ chrysotile serpentine)
Amphibole	Crocidolite (Blue asbestos/ Riebeckite)
Amosite (grunerite)	Fibrous zeolite including erionite and offretite
Tremolite	Richterite
Anthophyllite	Winchite
Actinolite	Serpentine or serpentinite - including Lizardite and Antigorite serpentines

Actions for all schools

Schools are to identify all geological kits and samples in the workplace including those in storage.

1. If your school finds a kit purchased prior to 2011, don't open it. Restrict access and notify your school's asbestos management team.
2. If your school identifies a kit containing 'leucotile' or any sample listed in Table 1, don't touch it. Restrict access and notify your school's asbestos management team.

Prior to the purchase of any new kits, schools are required to:

- obtain a listing from the supplier of the samples included in the kit to verify that the contents do not include any items listed in Table 1; and
- request that the supplier provide confirmation that the kit is entirely free from asbestos containing materials.

Apply this pre-purchase check to all mineral, geological and ore kits including:

- Individual geological specimens
- Igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rock and mineral kits
- (Moh's) Hardness kits
- Fluorescence and phosphorescence kits
- Crystal habit kits
- Cleavage (fracture) kits
- Lustre and Streak kits
- Specific gravity kits

Schools cannot assume that kits for sale are asbestos free.

Further information

- General information about asbestos is provided on the department's [asbestos management](#) webpage.
- For more information, contact Infrastructure.safety@qed.qld.gov.au.