

## Asbestos samples in mineral kits

This safety alert supersedes previous Mineral kit safety alerts.

The department has been alerted to the presence of asbestos rock samples contained in some imported 'mineral kits' purchased by schools. These kits have been available and sold recently throughout Australia.

Schools are advised to implement the following three steps:

1. **Kits containing a sample labelled as 'leucotile' are being recalled by the supplier** – the schools identified as having purchased these kits have been contacted by the department.

Suppliers will manage the recall process directly with schools. The whole kit is to be recalled; not just the leucotile sample.

2. **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.

If schools still have kit(s) that were purchased prior to 2011, immediately withdraw the entire kit from use. Contact your Regional Building and Asset Services (BAS) manager for assistance with removal and disposal.

Check kits purchased **after** March 2011:

- If your school has not been contacted by a supplier and identifies a kit containing 'leucotile' please determine the name of the supplier through the school's purchasing records and then contact Organisational Health on 3513 6547.
- Kits containing any sample listed in Table 1 (page 2) are to be withdrawn from use.
- Contact your Regional BAS manager for assistance with removal and disposal.

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

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

Example of pre-March 2011 kit containing samples including:

- asbestos
- serpentine
- tremolite,
- actinolite.

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

Firstly, 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

**Next**, 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:

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

Schools should not assume that kits for sale are asbestos free.

**Kits with any sample listed in Table 1 are not to be purchased.**

**Table 1:** names of geological samples that are to be excluded from purchase

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

### Why are these minerals excluded from purchase?

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.

Asbestos may be present in many geological samples in varying physical forms. Table 1 includes fibrous and/or friable forms of asbestos minerals and the chrysotile polymorphs (different forms) of serpentine.

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.

### Further information

General information about asbestos is provided on the department's asbestos management website [here](#).