

Appendix 1. Post-disaster asbestos safety and collection guidelines *(reproduced from the SPREP Regional Asbestos Strategy, 2011)*

a. First response for humanitarian aid

The risk of asbestos exposure to emergency services personnel, volunteers and local residents who are first responders to natural disasters may be high. First responders may be unaware of the hazards of asbestos and may be unable to identify asbestos-containing material. It is imperative that first responders understand how to protect themselves and should be equipped with, and wear appropriate face masks. Emergency responders should have access to 'Asbestos Emergency Kits' which should include:

- Gloves and booties
- Protective eyewear
- Disposable clothing
- Half face filter masks with P1 or P2 filters
- Garbage bags
- Water containers and spray equipment (to wet asbestos materials prior to moving them)

b. Asbestos contaminated waste clean-up

During a clean-up of damaged and destroyed buildings following a natural disaster such as a tsunami or cyclone, it is likely that there will be a need to handle and break up and dispose of asbestos-containing building and insulation materials. The main principles of safe handling in this type of situation are to:

- Restrict access to sites where there are piles of building debris, and to demolition sites and waste sites. In particular, keep children away;
- Identify the locations of asbestos-containing materials and carry out a risk assessment;
- Ensure that people involved in clean-up work are adequately informed of the risks and the methods of best practice;
- Provide workers with adequate personal protective equipment;
- Minimize the disturbance of asbestos containing materials;
- Friable materials present a particular hazard and should only be removed by trained personnel following accepted procedures, with workers wearing adequate personal protective equipment;
- Minimize the release of respirable asbestos into the atmosphere by wetting. Do not dust or sweep or use a domestic vacuum cleaner because this will release fibres and dust up into the air;
- Clean surfaces contaminated with asbestos-containing materials using wet methods;
- Keep piles of asbestos-containing materials covered e.g. with tarpaulins or sheets of plastic until they can be safely stored or disposed of. Wet thoroughly before moving the materials; and Ensure that waste is securely stored and adequately labelled. Do not mix with other waste prior to disposal.