Did you know that working with asbestos has been banned for almost 20 years but it’s still a major workplace hazard?

In Australia, asbestos kills approximately 4,000 people every year. That’s more than three times the annual road toll.

Up until the 1980’s, asbestos was a really popular building material and it was used extensively in many workplaces.

Today there are strict work health and safety laws than ban most work with asbestos to make sure people aren’t exposed.

In most circumstances, the law requires asbestos to be removed from workplaces by a licenced asbestos removalist.

The problem is, you can’t tell if a material contains asbestos just by looking at it. That’s why most workplaces with asbestos must keep a register that tells you where it is.

What can you do to stay safe?

One – always ask for the asbestos register before starting any work. This means you can know where asbestos is in the building and take necessary precautions.

Before starting any work at a home, you should ask the owner or property manager if they know of any asbestos in the property. Because although homes can be a workplace, they are not required to keep an asbestos register. And remember – many homeowners wont know if there is asbestos in their house.

Two – don’t be afraid to ask questions if you suspect something contains asbestos. Stop what you are doing until the situation is confirmed.

Three – make sure you follow the rules including using the right protective equipment and disposing of any asbestos safely.

And finally, if you’re worried that asbestos is causing harm at work, tell your employer or contact the work health and safety regulator for advice.

Know the risk and be asbestos safe.

There’s lots of places you can go for help and advice including our website www.asbestossafety.gov.au