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WORKSAFE ACT

SAFETY ALERT



30 November 2018

This Safety Alert has been issued due to the potential import of asbestos in Bunsen burner gauze mats into Australia.

BACKGROUND

WorkSafe ACT has been made aware of concerns that asbestos-containing material may be present in some Bunsen burner gauze mats commonly used in laboratories.

Gauze mats typically have a ceramic centre, and are often used with Bunsen burners.

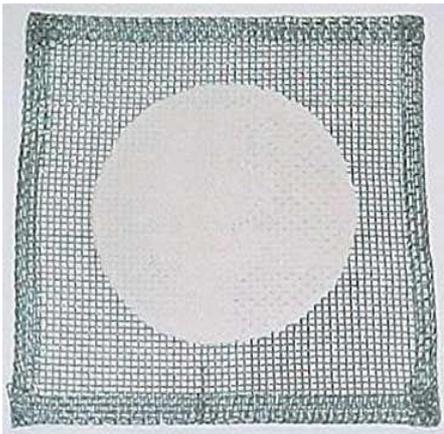


Figure 1: Gauze mat with ceramic centre



Figure 2: Gauze mat sitting on tripod over Bunsen burner.

Workplace health and safety laws prohibit a range of activities including the importation, supply, sale and use of asbestos. The law sets out further duties to identify all asbestos present in a workplace.

ACTION REQUIRED

Stop using mats and find out if they contain asbestos

Quarantine any gauze mats until you can confirm with your supplier that there is no asbestos-containing material in them (even though they may be labelled as 'asbestos-free'). If you cannot confirm this with your supplier, you should have them tested by a [licensed asbestos assessor](#) through a NATA-accredited laboratory.

Quarantining the gauze mats could be as simple as putting them in a locked cabinet or container which is labelled appropriately to indicate the potential for asbestos contamination.



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Dispose of mats containing asbestos

Gauze mats confirmed to contain asbestos must be disposed of as asbestos waste. If you are in any doubt about whether the gauze mats contain asbestos, dispose of them as if they do contain asbestos.

Check when you buy new gauze mats

If you are buying or importing gauze mats, ask your supplier for documentation confirming there is no asbestos in the products (even though they may be labelled as 'asbestos-free').

Local standards in some supplier countries may classify goods 'asbestos-free' where they meet a certain low level of asbestos content. In Australia, a product found with any level of asbestos is prohibited for import or use.

Risk from using asbestos-contaminated gauze mats

If a gauze mat contains asbestos, the risk from normal use will generally be extremely low. Particles and debris may break off during use or through abrasion or impact in storage, these will generally not represent an airborne risk.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about Bunsen Burner Gauze mats visit <https://www.asbestossafety.gov.au/> or contact [WorkSafe ACT](mailto:worksafe@act.gov.au) on 13 22 81, or via email worksafe@act.gov.au .



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