

ASP Safety Alert Electrical Safety & Compliance

Alert Number: SA05_20

17 June 2020

Subject: Incident - Incorrect Disposal of Asbestos Containing Meters

Key Messages

Asbestos may be found in Electrical Meters and Relays installed in customer's premises within Ausgrid's Network area

Dear ASP/2s

Ausgrid recently had an incident where asbestos containing metering equipment was incorrectly returned to Ausgrid's Wallsend Depot by an Authorised ASP/2. The metering equipment was the type identified to potentially contain asbestos, as detailed in Ausgrid's Safety Alert '[SA04_19 Asbestos in Electrical Meters and Relays](#)' (attached below) and was found in the regular meter returns bin at Ausgrid's Wallsend Depot.

Ausgrid identified that the ASP/2 failed to:

- Identify the asbestos containing metering equipment;
- *Double bag* the asbestos containing metering equipment; and
- Correctly dispose of the asbestos containing metering equipment in the required asbestos waste facilities at Ausgrid's depot.

Figures 1 and 2 below show the meter incorrectly disposed of in Ausgrid's Wallsend Depot meter returns bin. In this case the ASP/2 was issued a formal warning for the incident and advised that if any additional incidents occur Ausgrid will look to take further disciplinary action.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Requirements for working with Asbestos

ASP/2s are reminded that any work undertaken by an ASP/2 where there is Asbestos Containing Material must be done in accordance with:

- Ausgrid's Network Standard 211 Working with Asbestos Products (**NS 211**);
- The NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017
- SafeWork NSW Codes of Practice;
 - How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace; and
 - How to Safely Remove Asbestos.

When removing or handling affected meters and relays;

- The use of Level 1 asbestos PPE is required (as detailed in NS 211); unless
- The meter housing is damaged and there is a likelihood of disturbance of the ACM by drilling or where settled dust and debris are present that are likely to be disturbed during removal, in these cases Level 2 asbestos PPE is required (as detailed in NS 211).

Meters and relays of the types listed in Ausgrid's Safety Alert '[SA04_19 Asbestos in Electrical Meters and Relays](#)' removed from customer installations are to be double bagged at site and disposed of as asbestos waste; refer to NS211 for Asbestos waste disposal requirements.

Note: Only Ausgrid meters are to be returned to Ausgrid depots

Ausgrid

Electrical Safety & Compliance

ASP Safety Alert Environmental Services Hazardous Materials

Alert Number: SA04_19

8 April 2019

Subject: Asbestos in Electrical Meters and Relays

Key Messages

Asbestos has been identified in the sealant to the front window of electromechanical meters and external black bituminous casing and internal black bituminous fuse casing in Zellweger ZEQ relays. This equipment must be disposed of as asbestos waste.

Description of incident or hazard: (include photos where applicable)

In January 2019 Energy Queensland identified that a number of electromechanical meter types used in their network area contained asbestos material. Ausgrid has undertaken testing of sample meters and relays used in customer installations across the NSW distribution networks and established that some contain chrysotile asbestos. The asbestos is contained in the mastic sealant to the front window of the meters and the external black bituminous casing and internal black bituminous fuse casing of the relays.

Independent advice (from Coffey Services) is that the asbestos is bonded and non-friable. The identified asbestos is in a bonded state within a matrix of hard-set bitumen compound or a sealant/glue. Therefore possibility of asbestos fibre release disturbance potential giving rise to respirable fibres would be classed as **Low Risk**.

Extent of impact:

Due to a number of electromechanical meters testing positive for asbestos, as a precautionary measure, all electromechanical meters with black covers are suspected of containing asbestos and are to be treated as asbestos waste until further notice.

Note: **Digital meters and electromechanical meters with clear covers are not affected.**

Zellweger – ZEQ (Ripple Control Receiver) meter relays also tested positive for asbestos. The Zellweger ZEQ relays have been used in customer installations and as street lighting control points in kiosk substations in the Ausgrid network within the former Mackellar, Hunter and Cessnock County Council areas. All Zellweger ZEQ relays are suspected as containing asbestos and are to be treated as asbestos waste.



Example of electromechanical BAZ meter with asbestos black mastic



Zellweger – ZEQ relay with asbestos black bituminous casing

Immediate action taken (or to be taken) to eliminate or control the risk:

1. Any work undertaken by an ASP/2 where there is Asbestos Containing Material must be done in accordance with:
 - Ausgrid's Network Standard 211 Working with Asbestos Products (**NS 211**);
 - The NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017
 - Safe Work Australia Code of Practices;
 - How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace; and

- How to Safely Remove Asbestos.
2. When removing or handling affected meters and relays;
 - The use of Level 1 asbestos PPE is required (as detailed in NS 211); unless
 - The meter housing is damaged and there is a likelihood of disturbance of the ACM by drilling or where settled dust and debris are present that are likely to be disturbed during removal, in these cases Level 2 asbestos PPE is required (as detailed in NS 211).
 3. Meters and relays of the types listed in this Safety Alert removed from customer installations are to be double bagged at site and disposed of as asbestos waste; refer to NS211 for Asbestos waste disposal requirements.

Returning metering equipment and associated devices

When returning metering equipment and associated devices (e.g. LCU) to an Ausgrid Field Operations depot, ASP/2s must ensure that the meters are separated into the appropriate mechanical (asbestos waste and non-asbestos waste) and electronic return locations to allow for ease of sorting and disposal.

Only Ausgrid meters are to be returned to Ausgrid Field Operations depots.

ASP/2s must only return metering equipment which was removed due to works conducted under the NSW ASP scheme (e.g. permanent disconnection of supply). ASP/2s conducting works for AEMO Metering Providers are to return metering as per the Metering Providers' procedures.

Meter return location change and days of operation

Ausgrid will be relocating the Oatley meter return bin from its current location to our Homebush depot. Meter returns will be accepted at the Oatley return bin until Thursday **11 April 2019**.

As of Monday **15 April 2019**, meter returns will only be accepted at the following locations on their respective days of operation.

ASP/2s are to arrange access to disposal bins by contacting the Ausgrid security officer at the main boom gates upon arrival.

Homebush	Building 5 25-27 Pomeroy St Homebush, NSW 2140 Access via main boom gate	Days of Operation Monday to Thursday 8:00am – 3:00pm
Wallsend	Building 3 78 Abbott Street Wallsend, NSW 2287 Access via main boom gate	Days of Operation Monday to Thursday 8:00am – 3:00pm

For further information contact:

Ausgrid Environmental Services
Hazardous Materials Hotline 02 9394 6961 or
Email: hazmat@ausgrid.com.au

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Environmental Services Hazardous Materials

Links

NS211 - Working With Asbestos Products

<https://www.ausgrid.com.au/-/media/Documents/Technical-Documentation/NS/NS211>

ES3

<https://www.ausgrid.com.au/-/media/Documents/Technical-Documentation/ES/ES3-Part-A---Metering-Installations>