



MEDIA RELEASE

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\$10,000 fine for removing asbestos without a licence

A sole trader has been fined \$10,000 (and ordered to pay \$4000 in costs) for removing asbestos fencing when he did not have an asbestos removal licence.

Justin John Collins pleaded guilty to having carried out work when he was not authorised to carry out that class of work and was fined in the Perth Magistrates Court last Friday.

In April 2022, Mr Collins removed and disposed of 41 metres of asbestos fencing from between two houses in Beckenham after telling the property owners that he was licensed to do so.

A fencing contractor who was later engaged to install a Colorbond fence discovered pieces of asbestos fencing in the ground and ceased work.

Mr Collins subsequently told the owners he did not have to remove the asbestos that was below the ground, and the owners reported the matter to WorkSafe.

It was found that Mr Collins did not hold an asbestos removal licence, and he was prosecuted under the Work Health and Safety Act.

WorkSafe Commissioner Sally North said the case should send out a clear warning that licences are required to remove and dispose of asbestos.

“Licensing requirements for asbestos removal are in place for a very good reason,” Ms North said.

“Licence holders must undertake the appropriate training and must demonstrate they have the skills to do the job safely and not endanger themselves or anyone else in the vicinity of the removal and disposal.

“It’s important for anyone considering engaging an asbestos removalist to first check on the Service WA app or the WorkSafe website that the contractor holds the appropriate licence.

“And I’d encourage sighting of photo identification such as a driver’s licence and a check with the worker’s company to make sure the worker is actually employed by the company.

“As a property owner, it’s important to be proactive and make asbestos identification and removal part of your business plan.



Government of **Western Australia**
WorkSafe Commissioner



“By planning ahead to proactively remove asbestos from your workplace you can reduce ongoing management costs and the risk of the material being disturbed through an incident or an extreme weather or fire event.

“This kind of incident creates risk and is expensive to clean up.”

(Please note that the person fined is not the Justin Collins, Certified Occupational Hygienist, who is employed by Occuhealth Pty Ltd.)

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