

ILLUSIONS AUSTRALIA

SAFE WORK PROCEDURE

SWP 028 – FIBRE CEMENT SHEETING - CUTTING & HANDLING

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Minimum requirements for safe handling and cutting of fibre-cement sheeting at Illusions Australia.

The principal controls are to minimise dust generation, use suitable cutting methods and prevent uncontrolled exposure to respirable dust.

2. AUTHORISATION AND COMPETENCY

Workers must be instructed in the approved cutting method and dust controls before work.

Any material suspected to contain asbestos must not be cut, drilled or disturbed and must be escalated for identification/management.

3. REQUIRED PPE

The following PPE must be worn as appropriate:

- Safety footwear.
- Eye protection.
- Hearing protection for powered cutting.
- Respiratory protection appropriate to the assessed dust exposure where required.
- Gloves for handling sheet edges.

4. PRE-START CHECKS

Before commencing work, confirm that:

- Material is confirmed as suitable fibre-cement product and not suspected asbestos-containing material.
- Manufacturer instructions/SDS are available where required.
- Lowest-dust cutting method suitable for the task has been selected.
- On-tool extraction or wet method is available where applicable.
- Work area is separated from others and adequately ventilated.
- Sheets can be supported and handled safely.
- Waste collection method is ready.

5. SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURE

1. Plan cuts to minimise the number of cuts and handling.
2. Move sheets using team/mechanical assistance where size/weight requires it.
3. Support sheets on a stable cutting surface.
4. Use manufacturer-recommended low-dust tools/methods.
5. Operate extraction or wet suppression continuously where specified.
6. Keep other persons away from the dust-generating area.

7. Avoid dry sweeping or compressed-air cleaning.
8. Collect offcuts and dust using suitable vacuum/wet methods.
9. Bag/contain waste and clean the area before removing controls.

6. PROHIBITED PRACTICES

Workers must not:

- Cut or drill suspected asbestos-containing material.
- Use uncontrolled dry cutting that generates excessive visible dust.
- Use compressed air to clean dust.
- Dry sweep fine dust where it will become airborne.
- Cut in occupied areas without separation/control.
- Handle large sheets alone where this creates hazardous manual handling.

7. RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA

Fibre-cement products can contain crystalline silica and cutting can generate respirable dust.

- Use elimination/substitution of cutting where practicable.
- Use low-dust tools, extraction or wet controls.
- Follow current product and workplace silica-control requirements.

8. MANUAL HANDLING

Sheets can be heavy, awkward and brittle.

- Plan the route.
- Use team/mechanical handling where required.
- Store sheets securely to prevent collapse.

9. FAULTS, DAMAGE AND ABNORMAL CONDITIONS

Stop if dust controls fail, excessive visible dust develops, material identity is uncertain, or equipment/extraction is defective.

Do not resume until effective controls are restored.

10. SHUTDOWN AND HOUSEKEEPING

- Stop dust-generating equipment.
- Vacuum/wet-clean surfaces and tools.
- Contain waste.
- Store remaining sheets safely.
- Report control failures or defects.

11. EMERGENCY AND INCIDENT RESPONSE

1. Stop the equipment or activity immediately.
2. Isolate the hazard or energy source where safe to do so.
3. Provide or obtain first aid as required.

4. Notify the Foreman, Leading Hand or other authorised Illusions Australia representative.
5. Call emergency services where required.
6. Do not recommence until the incident, defect or unsafe condition has been addressed.

12. STOP WORK REQUIREMENT

Work must stop where:

- Material may contain asbestos.
- Required dust control is unavailable.
- Visible dust cannot be adequately controlled.
- Sheet cannot be handled safely.
- Correct PPE/equipment is unavailable.

No production requirement or deadline takes priority over safe work.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document	SWP 028 – Fibre Cement Sheeting - Cutting & Handling
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Prepared By	Aidan McDonnell
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