



Working in partnership to protect and preserve life, property and the environment in the ACT

Dear

I refer to your correspondence received on 12 September and 22 November 2011 in which you sought access under the *Freedom of Information 1989* (the Act) to documents relating to:

'...policies and procedures on

- (1) Working with asbestos*
- (2) Personal protection equipment issued*
- (3) Exposure to asbestos; and*
- (4) Attending incidents with asbestos*

For the following agencies: ACT Ambulance Service, SES, Fire Service and Rural Fire Service.'

I am an officer authorised under section 22 of the Act to make a decision in relation to your request.

A review of files has located 10 documents within the scope of your request. Following review and consideration of these documents, I have determined to fully release all documents.

To assist you to interpret my decision I have attached a schedule for each file at Attachment B.

In addition to the enclosed documents, I can advise that the ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Service do not have specific policies or procedures for working with asbestos, exposure to asbestos or attending incidents with asbestos. As Business Units within the Department of Justice and Community Safety (JaCS), all services follow the JaCS OH&S policy and our staff are trained in risk assessment.

In the event that an ACT Emergency Services Agency employee or volunteer is exposed to asbestos, employees are required to report the incident via an Accident/Incident reporting process and through the lodgement of an Accident/Incident (AIR) report form.

The *Dangerous Substances Act 2004* Effective: 1 July 2011 is a useful reference when dealing with dangerous substances such as asbestos. A copy of this Legislation can be found at <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/>

In addition, the ACT Government has a website on asbestos awareness: <http://www.asbestos.act.gov.au/> and Safe Work Australia provides information regarding asbestos exposure: <http://safeworkaustralia.gov.au>

Freedom of information requests attracts fees and charges for time spent searching and retrieving documents, decision-making time and photocopying. In relation to your request, I have decided that no fee is payable due to financial hardship.

As you would be aware, the Act allows for a review to be conducted if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your application. Your review rights are described in the paper at Attachment A.

If you have any further queries in relation to this FOI request, please do not hesitate to contact the Manager ESA Executive Support, Ms Karen Schofield on 620 78666.

Yours sincerely



Mark Crosweller AFSM FAIM
Commissioner
ACT Emergency Services Agency
5 December 2011.