

Client Newsletter

August 2017

EnviroServ Waste Management does hazardous asbestos removal cleanups after Knysna fire tragedies.

The apocalyptic fires which claimed several lives and more than 1 000 houses in Knysna will long be remembered for the havoc and sadness they wreaked.

EnviroServ's HazTech services are involved with cleaning asbestos from fire-damaged properties. Generally asbestos clean-ups are done on older buildings which were built with asbestos roof sheeting, ceilings, downpipes, cutters, asbestos rope and old asbestos water tanks.

Asbestos fibres are hazardous when inhaled, and can cause long term lung damage. They can be released into the air when products containing asbestos are incorrectly handled, removed or transported for disposal. They must also be correctly disposed at a registered high hazardous landfill and not at any municipal landfill site.

EnviroServ's Regional HazTech Manager for Eastern Cape Pieter Joubert said there were dangers involved for both homeowners and others living in the neighbourhood if correct methods were not used. "Asbestos clean ups need specialised people, products and equipment to ensure they are 100% safe."



A team of 10 skilled HazTech asbestos specialists from EnviroServ has completed their first clean up job. "It is essential that workers wear correct protective clothing; this safety gear includes dust overalls, asbestos dust mask, protective eyewear, hard hat, gloves and booties over safety boots. Workers also go through a decontaminate system once they have completed work, which includes exiting through a decontamination shower system, having clean clothes to wear and correctly storing contaminated work gear. Asbestos sign boards and barricades must be set up to alert the public that there is asbestos work taking place on a site," Joubert said.

Due to the dangers involved, not just any contractor can do asbestos clean ups - companies must be registered with the Department of Labour. "An asbestos work notification must be submitted to the Department before work can commence and the Asbestos Inspection Authority (AIA) comes to site to monitor asbestos fibres in the air. An asbestos site clearance certificate is issued by the AIA once the project is complete."



The asbestos waste materials from the Knysna fire damaged properties were transported safely to EnviroServ's hazardous landfill site in Port Elizabeth, where it were treated and disposed of according to the legal requirements. "As with any disposal, a waste disposal certificate was issued to the homeowner or insurance company to prove that the waste was safely disposed."

Joubert said he expected work on additional sites to be secured in the coming weeks. "Our focus is to reduce environmental risk and assist our customers complying with the waste legislation thereby ensuring peace of mind."



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Raising the waste game



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