

IMPORTS OF TILES & STONE PRODUCTS FROM CHINA

24th February 2010

Dear Valued Customer

Recent imports of natural stone tiles from China have been found to contain Tremolite asbestos which is a prohibited hazardous substance. Tremolite asbestos can cause asbestos related diseases such as mesothelioma.

As a result of this finding Australian Customs authorities have indicated that tile and stone product imports from China are likely to be subject to higher levels of scrutiny on arrival in Australia. Importers of this product type may therefore be subject to clearance delays or additional costs as a result of Customs directions.

VISA strongly urges all importers of tiles or stone products from China to ensure that their supplier documentation contains specific product descriptions that will assist Customs authorities to identify the product content e.g. "red quartzite ledgerstone tiles" instead of "quartz tile".

Attached is a copy of a safety alert which has been issued by WorkCover NSW and provides further information about the tiles that have been found to contain the Tremolite asbestos. The safety alert also outlines steps which should be taken if you believe you may have already imported product that contains this substance.

Should you have any further questions relating to this issue please contact your local VISA representative.

One Phone Call

One Company

One Solution

For further information visit

www.visa-aust.com.au

Email: info@visa-aust.com.au



SAFETY ALERT

IMPORTATION OF TREMOLITE ASBESTOS NATURAL STONE TILES

This safety alert has been issued following the recent importation from China of natural stone tiles that were found to contain Tremolite asbestos, which is a prohibited hazardous substance.

Tremolite asbestos (a carcinogenic substance) is a mineral consisting of elongated, needle-like fibres, which can lodge in the lungs and cause asbestos-related diseases including mesothelioma.

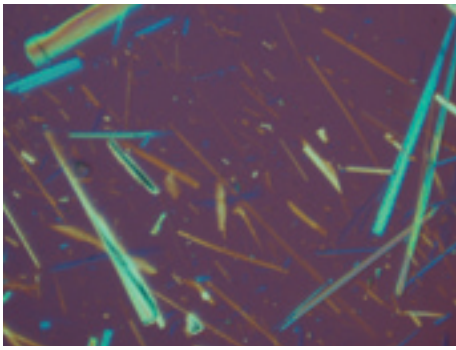


OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* requires that suppliers of substances must ensure that those substances are safe and without risks when properly used.

The importation, sale or use of all forms of asbestos, including Tremolite asbestos, is prohibited under the *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956* and the *NSW Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*.

RISK CONTROLS

- Importers of natural stone tiles from China should ask for documentation that verifies the content of the tiles and ensure they do not import any tiles known to contain Tremolite asbestos or any other forms of asbestos-bearing rock.
- Importers or retailers who suspect they may have natural stone tiles that contain Tremolite asbestos or other forms of asbestos-bearing rock are to immediately inform WorkCover, and materials are to be tested by a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA)-accredited testing facility.
- Where natural stone tiles are identified to contain Tremolite asbestos or any other forms of asbestos-bearing rock, they are to be sealed using appropriate plastic or leak-proof containers and disposed of as asbestos waste at an approved asbestos disposal facility.
- Where natural stone tiles containing Tremolite asbestos or any other forms of asbestos-bearing rock have been installed, the affected area is to be isolated until the material is removed by a licenced asbestos removalist and the area cleared by an occupational hygienist.

<p>Tremolite under 100 X magnification under polarizing microscopy (note the fine, needle-like crystalline structures).</p>	
<p>'Snow white' Tremolite asbestos-containing natural stone tiles. They come in a bright white colour and the surface has plates of crystals. Grooves can be felt on the surface of the plates.</p>	 <p>(Front)</p>  <p>(Back)</p>

FURTHER INFORMATION

Importing asbestos into Australia – available at www.customs.gov.au

Lists of approved asbestos disposal facilities – available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Working safely with asbestos – available at www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or by calling **13 10 50**.

Disclaimer

This publication may contain occupational health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website (www.legislation.nsw.gov.au).

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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