

SAFETY ALERT



Asbestos warning issued on some USG Boral board products

Plasterboard manufacturer USG Boral has issued a warning to customers that some of their fire-rated plasterboard products may be contaminated with asbestos.

The contamination affects fire-rated plasterboards containing vermiculite imported from China and was discovered in routine testing.

The company has told builders to quarantine any USG Boral fire-rated plasterboard products pending further advice. The company says the issue only affects its fire-rated plasterboard and that the level is 0.1% of the 3% vermiculite put into the board.

We know there is no safe level of asbestos exposure so construction businesses must take immediate steps to quarantine potentially contaminated products and ensure workers and customers are safe.”

The CFMEU will engage with the companies to eliminate the risk of exposure from factories, distribution centres and construction sites.

Workers are entitled to know if the products they are using are effected. WHS Representatives and Site Safety Committees should undertake an audit of their sites to determine if contaminated products have, or are, being used.

This latest asbestos contamination issue confirms the CFMEU’s repeated warnings that imported building products, particularly those from China, may not be safe.

There have been many instances of building supplies that are manufactured or sourced in poorly regulated markets like China failing basic safety requirements or exposing workers or end customers to unnecessary risk.

USG Boral is advising customers to quarantine the following fire-rated plasterboard products and refrain from installing, distributing or supplying them to customers:

- Firestop® Plasterboard
- Fire Wetstop™ Plasterboard
- Multistop™ Plasterboard range (3/3HI, 4/4HI, 5/5HI)
- Shaftliner™ Mould Stop Plasterboard.

USG Boral says it has stopped using the Chinese-sourced vermiculite and will switch to another source and is arranging for the safe removal of all unused Chinese-sourced vermiculite from their facilities at Camellia, Port Melbourne, and Pinkenba, and is testing all finished products made using vermiculite as an ingredient.

Authorised by Darren Greenfield, State Secretary