

Asbestos Removalist interview questions

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What to expect

Asbestos removalist interviews focus on safety, regulatory knowledge and your ability to work methodically under pressure. Employers want to see that you understand the health risks, can follow a licensed removal process, and will speak up if something is wrong.

- **Process and technical:** Questions that ask you to walk through containment setup, removal methods and clearance procedures step by step.
- **Safety and compliance:** Questions about WHS duties, licence conditions, SWMS, air monitoring and waste tracking.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for a past example, such as finding unexpected asbestos or managing a tight deadline safely.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Questions about what you would do if containment failed, a client pressured you to cut corners, or equipment broke down.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about explaining risks and processes to homeowners, site managers or concerned occupants.

Typically a phone screen with a supervisor, then a face-to-face or site-based interview with a licensed removal supervisor and sometimes a WHS advisor. You may be asked to describe your last few jobs and how you handled specific hazards. Some employers include a practical walk-through of a simulated containment setup.

1. Walk me through how you set up a containment for friable asbestos removal.

Why they ask

This tests your process knowledge and whether you understand the sequence that keeps fibres out of the air.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: start with the asbestos register and risk assessment, then barricades and signage, then negative air units, then the decontamination unit, then the removal sequence.

Example answer

"First I check the asbestos register and confirm the scope with the supervisor. I set up hard barricades and warning signage, then seal the area with plastic sheeting. I position negative air pressure units to create a pressure differential, and set up a decontamination unit with a dirty zone and a clean zone. I run HEPA vacuums and wet sprayers before any removal starts. Once containment is verified with a smoke test or pressure gauge, I begin wet removal from the top down."

2. Tell me about a time you found unexpected asbestos on a site.

Why they ask

This shows how you handle surprises and whether you follow the stop-work and report process.

How to structure your answer

STAR: describe the situation, the task, the action you took, and the result.

Example answer

"On a residential renovation, I was removing a wall when I noticed a suspicious board behind the plaster. I stopped work immediately and told the supervisor. We isolated the area and arranged a sample to be tested. It came back as friable asbestos, so we upgraded the containment and brought

in a licensed Class A team. I documented the find and updated the asbestos register. The client was kept informed, and the removal was completed without any fibre release."

3. What would you do if the negative air pressure unit failed mid-removal?

Why they ask

This tests your judgement under pressure and your commitment to containment integrity.

How to structure your answer

Assess and act: stop work, evacuate, communicate, fix, verify, document.

Example answer

"I would stop removal immediately, tell everyone to leave the containment, and not let anyone back in. I would check if the unit can be restarted or swapped out. If not, I would seal the area and call the supervisor. I would keep the exclusion zone in place and arrange for air monitoring before anyone re-enters. After the fix, I would run a pressure test and visual check before resuming. I would also write an incident report."

4. How do you make sure your work complies with WHS laws and the conditions of your asbestos removal licence?

Why they ask

This checks your technical knowledge of the regulatory framework and your practical habits.

How to structure your answer

Explain the framework: WHS Act, regulator guidance, licence conditions, SWMS, PPE, air monitoring, waste tracking.

Example answer

"I start with the Safe Work Australia guidance and my state regulator's requirements. I follow the SWMS for the job, which covers PPE, containment, decontamination and emergency procedures. I wear a PAPR and disposable coveralls, and I check that air monitoring is done by a competent person. I only remove the class of asbestos my licence allows. For waste, I use sealed bags and labelled bins, and I keep disposal dockets. If anything is unclear, I ask the supervisor."

5. A homeowner is worried about asbestos in their ceiling and wants it gone quickly. How do you handle that?

Why they ask

This tests your client-facing manner and your ability to hold a safe line under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Empathy first, then explain the process, then set clear boundaries.

Example answer

"I would listen to their concerns and explain that I understand why they are worried. I would explain the process: we test first, then set up containment, remove the asbestos wet, decontaminate, and get a clearance certificate. I would be clear that we cannot rush the safety steps. I would give them a realistic timeline and keep them updated. If they push for a faster job, I would say that cutting corners risks their health and ours, and that we follow the regulations for everyone's protection."

6. What is the difference between friable and non-friable asbestos, and how does that change your approach?

Why they ask

This is a core technical question that reveals whether you understand the risk levels and the controls each one needs.

How to structure your answer

Define each, then compare the practical differences in removal, PPE and containment.

Example answer

"Friable asbestos is loose or crumbly and can be crushed by hand, so it releases fibres easily. Non-friable is bonded in materials like cement sheeting and is less likely to release fibres unless disturbed. For friable, I use full containment with negative air units and a Class A licence. For non-friable, the controls can be simpler but still need wet methods, PPE and decontamination. I always treat any asbestos as a serious hazard and follow the SWMS."