



National Headquarters

Level 12
80 The Terrace
PO Box 2133
Wellington
New Zealand

Phone +64 4 496 3600

19 November 2021

Mark Montgomery

By email: fyi-request-17299-2cd75103@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mark

Information Request – Potential exposure to asbestos

I refer to your official information request dated 21 October 2021, in which you ask a series of questions about potential exposure to asbestos. In accordance with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), I set out your questions and our responses below.

1. *How many fire related events were attended and / or investigated by Fire and Emergency New Zealand or its predecessor organisations that involved fire damage to structures in the 5 years to 30 June 2020.*

Please find enclosed the data in response to this question.

2. *In the same period how many events had asbestos recorded as a risk and / or hazard?*
3. *In the same period how many reports were made into the organisation's health and safety database/s where potential exposure to asbestos was identified arising out of those events?*

We understand you are requesting the number of incidents that we attended where we have identified asbestos, and how many events were entered into Fire and Emergency's health and safety reporting system.

Fire and Emergency records any work-related injury, illness, hazardous substance exposure or near miss events involving asbestos in its health and safety reporting system. Fire and Emergency does not centrally record the number of events where asbestos was recorded as a risk and/or hazard, including in its incident reporting database.

The Fire and Emergency health and safety reporting system holds records for 270 events reported over the past five years where potential exposure to asbestos is noted.

4. *How many sets of Level 2 gear was sent to Total Care and identified when sent as potentially asbestos contaminated during this period?*

Fire and Emergency does not maintain records of the specific contaminant on the garments. Consequently, it is necessary to decline this part of your request under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the data is not held by Fire and Emergency.

5. In the 20 years to 30 June 2020 how many claims made by past and / or present workers of Fire and Emergency New Zealand or its predecessor organisations to the Accident Compensation Corporation have been acknowledged and / or accepted for work-related asbestos diseases.

a. Please break down by year and region.

b. Please indicate whether they were for paid or volunteer firefighters, including fire investigators, managers, etc.

Under its Accredited Employer Agreement with Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Fire and Emergency is responsible for managing the work injury claims of paid staff (employees) for a period of 48 months. Claims are then transferred to ACC for ongoing management.

Over the past 20 years there have been three claims within scope of your request, of which one was accepted. They were made in 2007, 2014 and 2018. Two were from Te Ūpoko and one from Te Kei. Note, this information is only available for the former New Zealand Fire Service and Fire and Emergency and only to paid staff (employees).

Gradual process injuries such as asbestos exposure sustained by Volunteer Firefighters are not covered by ACC. Fire and Emergency has no data on volunteer injury claims.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Raewyn Bleakley
Deputy Chief Executive, Office of the Chief Executive

