

ETU OHS REPS NEWSLETTER



ASBESTOS INFORMATION & SUPPORT SERVICE

The Asbestos Information & Support Service Inc (AISS) is a not-for-profit charitable organisation that survives solely on donation and membership. AISS mainly consists of committed volunteers many of whom have been personally touched by asbestos disease. Our efforts are directed at assisting others similarly affected.

There are many free services that are offered by AISS, these include:

- Support and assistance to asbestos disease victims and their families
- Self-help support group meetings
- Telephone advice on the dangers of asbestos, how to identify asbestos and how to remove it safely
- The health effects of asbestos exposure
- Contact details for asbestos medical and legal specialists
- Legal entitlements due to asbestos exposure
- Advocacy for legislative change concerning asbestos in the community

AISS supports victims of asbestos-related diseases. As well as its support activities, AISS aims to educate the general community about the dangers of asbestos, and advocate for the removal of asbestos from our environment and for more funding put towards medical research into a cure for mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases.

Approximately 150 people are diagnosed with mesothelioma – a cancer of the lining of the lung or stomach caused by asbestos exposure – each year in Victoria alone, this figure being approximately 650 nationally. Due to the fact that there is a latency period of 20 - 40 years between asbestos exposure and diagnosis of an asbestos-related disease our President, Mr Lawrie O'Shea calls it the "silent killer". Unfortunately Lawrie, a plumber, lost his wife Barbara through contracting

mesothelioma from washing Lawrie's overalls each week which contained asbestos dust.

There are three waves of asbestos exposure, the first being the mining of asbestos and the creation of asbestos products, the second being tradesmen working with asbestos, such as plumbers, electricians, builders etc and the third wave, home renovators. Due to the fact that asbestos products were not banned from Australia until 1985 it is premised that 60-70% of homes built before 1990 will contain asbestos in some form. It is estimated that around 350 000 homes throughout Victoria contain asbestos with many home owners unaware of the asbestos products within their homes. Current statistics show that asbestos exposure consists of 70% due to work-related exposure and 30% through home renovations but it is believed that home renovation exposure will increase to around 50%. Due to the fact that home renovation exposure is on the rise and there are no real regulations on asbestos removal when related to domestic premises, we would like the State Government to implement regulations that requires a mandatory asbestos audit at certain trigger points, such as buying, selling or renovating a house. Such regulations currently exist in the ACT and could be implemented within Victoria with considerable ease. It would also be mandatory for the home owner to inform any tradesmen working on their premises of the existence of asbestos within their home. We would also like to see regulations implemented that require only registered asbestos removalists be able to remove asbestos from the home if the home owner decides to have it done professionally.

For free information concerning removal of asbestos or for information on support services relating to asbestos-related disease please contact The Asbestos Information & Support Service (AISS) on: Telephone: 9654-9555

Email: aiss.contact@gmail.com

Address: 2nd Floor, 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, 3000

SOFT WIRING

Issues have arisen on site recently where electrical installation work was being performed by workers who do not hold electricians licences.

It was wrongly believed that because the installation plugged into a plug socket, any worker could perform this work.

Where the installation is fixed in position and the work is performed at the workplace where it will be connected to supply, the installation work must be performed by a licensed electrician. This installation will also require a certificate of electrical safety.

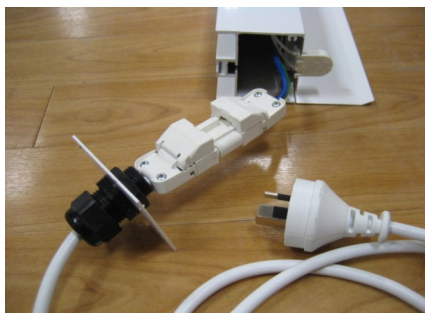
The photo directly below shows the connection plug which connected the light fittings together.



In this particular case, the light fittings were being connected together and utilised as pelmet lights. (See photo below)



The photo below shows the connection method to a 3 pin plug which in turn would connect to a plug socket.



This is not the first time that this issue has occurred.

On previous occasions it has been identified that workers were erecting office partitioning in an office fit-out and were also installing wiring which connected together to provide supply to socket outlets. This again was supposed to be installed by licensed electrical workers.

It seems that people think that any person can install such work because the wiring system:

- Plugs together
- Comes in short lengths
- Doesn't require the use of tools

We need to be ever vigilant to this type of activity. The workers that are doing this work are not licensed and could in turn potentially be prosecuted. The installation does require a Certificate of Electricity Safety, and the workers installing the wiring apart from being licensed must be employed by a Registered Electrical Contractor.

ESV has put out a Guideline on plug-in equipment.

2008 Calendar

EEIT OHS MEETING DATES

10AM -12PM

Melbourne –

Held at old ETU Office

Swanston St Carlton South

25th June

27th August

29th October

OHS REP TRAINING

Contact Tanya—0393269377 to book into the courses below.

Initial 5 Day OHS REPS Course

October 14, 15, 20, 21 and 22

1 Day Refresher OHS Rep Course

Melbourne

16th July

12th November

Country

Portland—30th July

Shepparton—24th September

Mildura—26th November