



ASSOCIATION OF TOURIST & HERITAGE RAIL AUSTRALIA

ABN 19 755 744 868

ATHRA ALERT #31 – April 2007

Wagon Headstock Carrier Plate

Warning of Potential Asbestos Material

Pacific National has recently reported it has been found that a limited number of wagon types may contain a bonded asbestos material used as wear strips on wagon headstock carrier plates. The exact types and number of wagons have yet to be fully identified. It is known that wagons built prior to 1989 have the potential to have these liners present on the carrier plate. The wear plate is located underneath the auto coupler. The wear liner is of a fibrous construction and may vary in colour and it is easily distinguishable from the steel, nylon, and rubberised wear liners that are also used in headstock carrier plates.

Wear Liner Identification (Courtesy of Pacific National)



Carrier Plate Steel Wear Liner



Carrier Plate Rubber Wear Liner



Carrier Plate Fibrous Material Containing Asbestos Wear Liner



Fibrous Wear Liner in Poor Condition To be Removed from Service

Pacific National has undertaken a sample survey of the wear liners on their wagons. They found that the condition of the wear liners ranges from fully intact to wear liners that have been damaged and broken. Based on risk assessment, Pacific National has adopted the following strategy for their wagons:

- Wear liners that are either damaged or broken need to be removed from service so that the wear liner can be replaced with a non-fibrous material.
- Wear liners that are in good condition will remain in service, however they will be sealed with an adhesive product to prevent any potential wear products from being released.
- When a train arrives into a terminal it will be inspected and where a wagon is identified with an asbestos wear liner, a suitably trained person will inspect the liner and seal it with an adhesive product.
- The services of licensed asbestos removalists will be used to remove wear liners and any remaining wear liner debris prior to a non fibrous wear liner being fitted.

Work Cover Advice

The New South Wales and Victorian Work Cover Authorities have advised Pacific National of the following:

If these products are maintained in good order they present no significant health risk. However, safety precautions must be taken when working on any product containing asbestos in a way that is likely to generate dust.

Key Message

Asbestos containing materials have been used extensively throughout industry in a variety of applications. While the use of asbestos containing materials has been phased out over a considerable period of time, asbestos containing materials may still be present on old equipment. Although the Pacific National report is specific to their wagons, this does not preclude similar materials being used for wear liners on other rail vehicles.

Recommended Actions:

- Make this Alert available to your rollingstock maintenance crews.
- Ensure your procedures for identifying, working with and removing asbestos and asbestos containing materials comply with the requirements of your State regulations.
- Ensure your rollingstock maintenance crews understand the appropriate procedures for working with asbestos containing materials and the health risks of not following the required procedures.
- Establish a procedure to identify and record the types of wear liner materials present on the headstock carrier plates of your rollingstock and to record the removal of asbestos containing materials if found.
- If asbestos containing wear liner materials are identified, establish a management procedure to minimise the exposure risk for your workers and customers.