Asbestos fibres are only a health hazard if they are small enough to be breathed into the lower parts of the lungs. Fires involving building materials containing asbestos have the potential to release tiny fibres into the air. However, air monitoring during and after fires has shown that very low levels of these fibres are generated. After the fire, levels of airborne asbestos return to the typically low levels that were present before the fire incident.

Walking on-site or wind blowing over a site where building materials containing asbestos are present are unlikely to generate significant quantities of airborne asbestos. Large disturbances, such as during clean-up or demolition of the fire-damaged building, must be done safely to ensure the level of asbestos fibres in the air is kept very low.

Overall, asbestos in fire-damaged buildings typically presents a very low risk to public health.

Who to contact for assistance
Ultimately, the owner of a fire-damaged building is responsible for ensuring any public health and safety issues arising from their building or their property are managed. The local council and a number of state government departments may oversee the owner’s actions to ensure that public health and safety is protected.

If you are concerned a fire-damaged building may not be structurally sound and could collapse, please contact...
your local council.

If you are concerned a homeowner is not taking precautions to stop asbestos getting into the air when cleaning up after the fire, please contact your local council in the first instance. The local council may seek Queensland Health’s assistance on this issue.

If you are concerned a business, contractor or tradesperson is not taking precautions to stop asbestos getting into the air when cleaning up after the fire, please contact Workplace Health and Safety Queensland on 1300 362 128.

For a significant building fire involving asbestos, such as a large commercial or industrial building, a coordinated government response may be carried out to manage public health and safety issues. If you are concerned about a significant building fire involving asbestos, please contact Workplace Health and Safety Queensland on 1300 362 128.

**Further Information**

- Contact 13 QGOV (13 74 68) for your nearest public health unit.

*Figure 2 Firefighting*