

Asbestos safety guide

What is asbestos?

Asbestos has been in use for thousands of years and used in the UK in a wide range of building materials and products from the 1950's up until it was banned in 1999. Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral made up of many small fibres. Its fibres are very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals.

Why might asbestos be a problem?

When Asbestos Containing Materials age or become damaged they can release fibres into the air. Inhaling high levels of these fibres may cause damage to your health. It is very unlikely that asbestos containing materials in your home will be harmful if left undisturbed but you must seek advice on what action to take if you think asbestos is present.

Asbestos in the home

Asbestos can be found in many building products within a home, some of the most common examples are listed below; We have gathered, and will continue to gather, information through surveys, inspection and testing to determine the presence or non-presence of Asbestos Containing Materials in our homes. Examples are;

- Some textured coatings – commonly known as Artex
- Some ceiling tiles
- Vinyl or thermoplastic floor tiles
- Eaves soffits
- Rainwater and soil pipes
- Corrugated cement sheeting – usually found on garages and outbuildings
- Flue pipes
- Electrical Fuse Boards, rope seals or flash guard
- Bakelite WC Cisterns – these are the old type black cisterns.
- Domestic equipment e.g. ironing boards and oven gloves
- Asbestos pipe lagging/insulation
- Warm air heating system linings
- Storage heaters; those made up to 1976
- Insulating boards, backs of doors or wall linings.

This is not a complete list.

It is estimated that asbestos containing materials are in around 1.5 million domestic properties around the UK. In the majority of cases these asbestos materials pose no risk to those people living in the property as it is only when it is damaged that the risk increases. If however the material is damaged then there may be certain actions we may need to take. If you are concerned about anything you think may contain asbestos please contact us for further advice.

How do you know if a material contains asbestos?

It is not always easy to tell whether a product in your home contains asbestos as modern asbestos-free materials often look similar – it is usually older products that contain asbestos. The use of asbestos in construction was banned in the UK in 1999. If you think a product contains asbestos but are unsure, the manufacturer or supplier should be able to help you.

DIY

If you suspect that you have asbestos material in your home extra care must be taken when undertaking DIY. Contact us for advice before undertaking any work on unknown or known asbestos containing materials. Remember when decorating some textured coatings (commonly known as ARTEX) contain asbestos fibres. They are normally well bonded and the fibres are not easily released. Therefore do not attempt to remove, sand, scrape, wire brush or drill it.

How should you dispose of asbestos?

Asbestos must never be put into the refuse bin. You must seek advice from us about making arrangements for either collection and/or disposal at a designated site.

More information

More information on asbestos can be found on the HSE website
<http://www.beware-asbestos.info>

Contact Details

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