



ASBESTOS – A Guide For Residents

What Is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a group of naturally occurring minerals. In the past, asbestos fibres were added to a variety of products to strengthen them, for fire proofing or to reduce noise.

What Are The Problems With Asbestos?

When asbestos materials age or become damaged they may release fibres into the air.

The fibres, when breathed in, could cause asbestos-related diseases such as a serious lung disorder.

The people who are most likely to be affected are those who have worked with asbestos for many years as part of their job. The asbestos found in houses presents a low risk and is unlikely to harm your health.

How Do I know If I Have Asbestos In My Home?

Properties built since the mid-1980s are unlikely to contain asbestos and properties built after 1995 are very unlikely to contain asbestos anywhere in the building.

If your home is one which might contain asbestos it is not always easy to spot it. Asbestos is used within other products such as cement or the materials that make up some ceiling tiles.

In the unlikely event that your home does contain asbestos it may be found in the following places:

- ❖ around the water tank - usually in the loft
- ❖ around bath panels
- ❖ behind electrical equipment
- ❖ panels behind heaters
- ❖ panels on inside of doors
- ❖ floor and roof tiles
- ❖ around the boiler

- ❖ in partition walls
- ❖ in guttering and pipes.

What Do I Do If I Suspect I Have Asbestos In My Home?

If you think something in your home may contain asbestos, don't panic. Asbestos containing materials in good condition will not give off asbestos fibres. There is no danger unless the fibres are released and breathed into the lungs.

Check the material regularly if you think it may contain asbestos. Don't touch it, but look for signs of wear and tear, things like rips, scratches or water damage. If you see any damage, please tell us straight away.

Our Responsibilities For Dealing With Asbestos

Due to the possible health risks, the law has been changed. Under the 'Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002' we have to keep a register saying where there is asbestos in the shared areas where you live.

At the moment we do not have to include individual homes in the register. However, as a responsible landlord we ask our contractors to assess homes for asbestos

during stock condition surveys, improvement work and when we upgrade empty homes.

We put this information in the register, so that we can tell you about any risks you may be exposed to.

We will make sure that any asbestos-containing material is kept in a safe condition and, where possible, we will remove it.

Normally, even if we only think the material might contain asbestos and needs to be removed, we will treat it as asbestos and remove it.

If we decide any asbestos-containing material is safe to be left in your home, it will be in good condition, and covered or out of reach.

We will check regularly to make sure it stays in good condition.

Removing Asbestos-Containing Material

If we need to remove any asbestos-containing material from your home, we will decide on the best way to do this.

We will use a specialist contractor, who will make sure that the material is

removed safely from your home and will take it to a licensed landfill site.

Any asbestos-containing material removed from your home will be double-wrapped in plastic and taped up.

Do's And Don'ts For Living With Asbestos

Do's

- ❖ Do treat asbestos-containing materials with respect.
- ❖ Do contact us if you want to do DIY work to your property.
- ❖ Do take every precaution to avoid damaging asbestos containing material that you know about.

Don'ts

- ❖ Don't panic if you think you have asbestos containing material in your home. It is only a problem if it gets disturbed. Remember, if you don't breathe in asbestos fibres, then it cannot harm you.
- ❖ Don't drill, sand or disturb an area which is known to contain asbestos.
- ❖ Don't remove any suspected asbestos containing material and try to dispose of it at your local council's recycling site.

- ❖ Don't sweep asbestos dust or debris as this sends the asbestos fibres into the air.
- ❖ Don't break asbestos containing materials into small pieces.
- ❖ Don't use a domestic vacuum cleaner to clean up. They spread the fibres rather than contain them.
- ❖ Don't carry asbestos containing materials through your home if you can avoid it.

Remember: Only a licensed contractor can remove asbestos products.

Our Contact:

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Where To Get More Information:

The Health and Safety Executive
www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos
National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection
www.nasca.org.uk
Asbestos Information Centre
www.aic.org.uk

If you would like this leaflet in another language or format please contact us:

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