

ASBESTOS IN THE HOME

HELP & PROTECTION FROM



Many homes in the United Kingdom are over 15 years old and, therefore, likely to contain some form of asbestos. Many people worry about asbestos but, as long as it is not damaged, flaking or producing dust, it is unlikely to cause problems. Core Surveys wants to tell you about the possible dangers and inform people that, as long as precautions are taken, it is possible to remove asbestos safely - or even live with it safely. So, it is important you find out about asbestos so that you can avoid doing anything that could put you and your family

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a natural material that was widely used in the UK construction industry between the 1950s and 1980s. It was added to products such as cement and plasterboard. Most houses and commercial properties built during this period are likely to contain some asbestos within their structure. Asbestos is made of lots of small fibres which are strong and resistant to heat and chemicals - which is why it was used in a wide range of building materials - and there are three main types:

- WHITE ASBESTOS (CHRYSTOLE)
- BROWN ASBESTOS (AMOSITE)
- BLUE ASBESTOS (CROCIDOLITE)



WHY IS ASBESTOS A PROBLEM?

Materials containing asbestos are generally safe if they are in good condition. However, if they are damaged or broken they can release fibres and dust into the air. These fibres can then harm your lungs and lead to serious diseases.

Asbestos materials vary in the amount of fibres they contain and the dangers they pose. This means that weaker materials with high fibre content - like insulation board - are more easily damaged than stronger materials - like asbestos cement.

WHO IS AT RISK FROM ASBESTOS?

The people most at risk from asbestos are those who are exposed to high levels of asbestos fibres over a long period of time during the course of their work. Health and Safety laws protect these people.

People who are exposed to high levels of asbestos fibres/dust which get into the air during do-it-yourself work at home are also at risk. If you are worried that a material in your home contains asbestos, ask Core Surveys for advice immediately.

We are all exposed to low amounts of asbestos which are present in the atmosphere but the Health and Safety executive consider these levels to be safe and unlikely to cause problems.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ASBESTOS?

In 2002 the 'Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations' came into effect. As part of this regulation, landlords, owners and those who have maintenance and repair responsibilities were given a 'Duty to Manage' the risks from asbestos in properties.



WHAT IN YOUR HOME COULD CONTAIN ASBESTOS?

Any home over 15 years old could contain materials made from asbestos. If your home was built after the mid 1980s it is unlikely to contain asbestos and if was built after 1990 it is extremely unlikely to contain asbestos.

ASBESTOS CEMENT

(Containing 10-15% asbestos)

This is the most commonly used asbestos product in homes. It was widely used as a cladding material and can still be found in garages, sheds and around the house. It is also found in guttering, down-pipes, corrugated sheets, wall panels, bath panels, flue pipes, coldwater tanks, patio tiles, roofing tiles and soffit boards.

ASBESTOS INSULATION BOARD (AIB)

(Containing 20-45% asbestos)

AIB is used for things including fire protection panelling to cupboards and doors, ceiling tiles, partition walls and soffit boards. It was banned in 1985.

ASBESTOS LAGGING

(Containing 55-100% asbestos)

This is mostly used to insulate pipes and boilers. It is rarely found in homes, especially those built after the mid 1970s.

ASBESTOS SPRAYED COATING

(Containing up to 85% asbestos)

This is used to protect structural steel from fire. Rarely found in homes but sometimes found in communal areas of flats. Banned in 1986.

OTHER ASBESTOS PRODUCTS

These include some decorative coatings (such as textured paints and plasters), plastic floor tiles, paper backed floor lino, toilet cisterns, some bitumen products, electrical linings and within some heating systems. These are generally considered lower risk products and are much less likely to release fibres.

HOW DO YOU TELL IF YOUR HOME CONTAINS ASBESTOS?

You cannot tell just by looking if something contains asbestos. In recent years new products have been developed without asbestos but they look very similar to materials they have replaced. The only way to tell if something contains asbestos is by testing a sample and this must ONLY be done by a trained surveyor.

If your home contains any of the materials listed left it is best to treat them as if they were asbestos and **LEAVE THEM ALONE.**

- **DO NOT** saw, drill or disturb these materials. Unless they are in good condition they are likely to be harmful.
- **DO NOT** attempt to remove asbestos lagging, spray coatings or large areas of insulation. These can ONLY be safely removed by a licensed contractor.



WHAT DO YOU DO IF THE MATERIAL IS DAMAGED?

If you have material in your home that is damaged, flaking or producing dust and you are worried it might be asbestos, contact Core Surveys. We will then send a trained, expert surveyor to inspect the material and take a sample. If we find there is a problem, we will arrange for the damage to be repaired or the asbestos to be removed and disposed of safely.

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