

What should you do if you have asbestos in your home?

Do not panic if you have asbestos materials in your home. Remember, if the asbestos materials are in good condition, removal should not be necessary and disturbance of such materials by non-specialists could cause more risk to you or your family's health.

Basically, you should never be in a position where you have to dispose of asbestos. Asbestos waste is a toxic and dangerous waste, which must be disposed of properly. It is against the law to put any asbestos waste in a dustbin - **seek advice** from the council about making arrangements for collection and disposal at a designated site.

You could consult your general practitioner or health board if you are concerned about your own health or the health of a member of your family and think that you or they have been exposed to asbestos.

Contacts

Address: See Tenant Handbook for your local Housing Offices
Email: housing@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Tel: 08456 08 12 03

Useful websites

- Health & Safety executive
www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos
- Asbestos Information Centre
www.aic.org.uk
- National Society for Clean Air & Environmental Protection
www.nasca.org.uk

If you have any difficulties in reading this leaflet please contact your local Housing Office

Asbestos in the Home

Introduction

This guide is all about asbestos: what it is, its health effects, where it may be in the home, and what you can do about it. Even if there is asbestos in your home, it is usually **NOT** a serious problem. Asbestos itself is not dangerous. Asbestos only becomes dangerous when it gets damaged over time or is disturbed during work on your home.

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a natural mineral (a fibrous silicate) found in rocks all over the world. It has been used commercially for about 150 years because it is strong, flexible and stable. The three types of asbestos are used in the UK are

- Crocidolite (blue asbestos)
- Amosite (brown asbestos)
- Chrysotile (white asbestos)

What are the health risks?

When asbestos containing materials are damaged or deteriorate with age, they can release tiny fibres into the air. These fibres can penetrate deep into the lungs and when in high levels can cause lung diseases such as asbestosis and lung cancer.

There are asbestos containing materials in about 5.5 million buildings in the UK. Because asbestos has been so widely used, there is a low level of asbestos in the air everywhere. Yet the risk to the public from asbestos in the home is low.

The greatest risk arises when asbestos is damaged or drilled, sawn, scrubbed or sanded. DIY work can result in brief but high level of exposure. If you think a material might contain asbestos, do not work on it – get expert advice!

Where Asbestos is found?

Building materials containing asbestos were widely used from 1930 to around 1980. Houses and flats refurbished at this time may contain asbestos materials.

Asbestos has also been used in some heat-resistant household products such as oven gloves and ironing boards. The use of asbestos in these products reduced in the mid 1980's and since 1993 its use in most products has been banned.

- It is not always easy to tell whether a product contains asbestos, as modern asbestos-free materials often look similar – remember it is usually older products that contain asbestos.
- Loft or cavity wall insulation **does not contain asbestos.**