

Asbestos in the home

Introduction

As part of our commitment to health and safety we have produced this booklet to tell you about asbestos, where it might be found and to let you know what you should do if your home has asbestos in it.

Asbestos products are found in most homes and if they are in a good state of repair and left undisturbed they present no hazard to health.

This leaflet gives advice and guidance on the safe management of asbestos.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous mineral that has been mined from rock in the ground in many countries throughout the world for more than 4,000 years. A large amount of asbestos has been imported into Britain over the last 150 years. Asbestos was a popular building material during the 1950s, 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s.

It has been used in a large range of products and construction materials to improve strength, durability, fire resistance and insulation (it keeps heat in and cold out).

Most forms of asbestos were banned in the early 1980s with all asbestos banned from use in the UK in 1999. Properties built since 2000 are very unlikely to contain any asbestos.

There are six types of asbestos, but the main three types are:

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

Is asbestos dangerous?

We are all exposed to very low levels of asbestos as it is in the air we breathe – due to being a naturally occurring mineral and its worldwide use.

It is unlikely that the levels of asbestos found in our properties will be harmful, but if you are planning any DIY or you have damaged a material which you believe contain asbestos, you should ask for advice from the Housing Leeds Asbestos Team as quickly as possible about what to do next.

Housing Leeds Asbestos Team 0113 3781123.

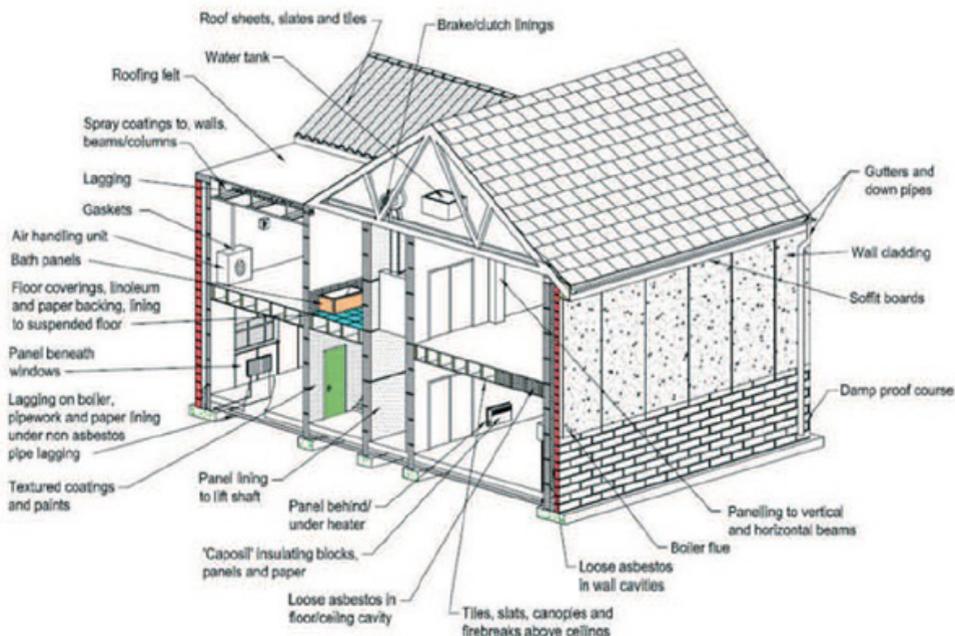
Advice and guidance

Remember: asbestos is safe unless it is disturbed and fibres are released.

Housing Leeds aims to maintain your property well and any asbestos containing materials are unlikely to need attention. Any materials that are in a good condition is unlikely to pose any significant risk to your health. However, you could be at risk when carrying out DIY or minor building repairs without following guidelines. Permission must be obtained from the Housing Manager for all DIY and minor building works been undertaken, this is a requirement under your tenancy agreement and could result in recharges if no permission has been granted.

If you are planning any DIY work after getting permission and think that asbestos may be present then contact our Housing Leeds Asbestos Team 0113 3781123.

Where is asbestos most commonly found?



Externally asbestos can be found within the:

- eaves soffit
- verge under-cloak
- rain water gutter
- rain water pipe
- flue pipes and terminals
- hip, ridge and roof tiles
- in corrugated cement sheeting which is usually found on sheds and garages.

Internal asbestos could be found in:

- textured coatings such as artex - usually before 1990
 - fire stop panels (inside heater cupboard doors or near a heat source)
 - ceiling and wall boards
 - floor tiles (thermo-plastic)
 - WC cisterns made from composite materials
 - flue pipes (asbestos cement)
 - electrical mains fuse cupboards
 - inset panels, fibre gaskets to gas fires, parkray type fires and electrical storage heaters
 - bath panels.
-

Can I remove asbestos myself?



No, under no circumstances should you attempt to remove it.

Anyone who has had asbestos products identified in their property and who disturbs that product, to the extent that it releases fibres into the atmosphere, may be at risk.

If you carry out work which involves drilling, sawing, sanding or cutting into the fabric of any asbestos containing material, you could potentially be at risk.

Never attempt to remove, sand, scrape, wire brush, drill any surface or item containing asbestos.

What should I do if I suspect I have asbestos in my home?

You must not carry out structural repairs or improvements to your home other than cleaning and basic decorating unless permission has been given. You may not get permission where there is a likelihood of removing or damaging asbestos products.

Never attempt to remove, sand, scrape, wire brush, drill any surface or item containing asbestos.

External Products

You should report all suspected asbestos containing materials and items to your local neighbourhood housing office. If any external structural damage occurs through extreme weather conditions or general deterioration causing guttering, piping, roof tiles or corrugated sheeting to break you should also report it.

Toilet Cisterns and Floor Tiles

Manufactured from plastic with a small amount of asbestos fibre to give additional strength. This is so well bonded that it would take drilling or mechanical grinding to release the asbestos fibres. So, generally they present no hazard.

Textured Coatings

Some textured coatings, such as artex, which are commonly used as a decorative finish to walls and ceilings, contain asbestos fibres. They are normally well bonded and the fibres are not easily released. In recent years only non-asbestos grades of textured coating have been used but both versions look identical.

If it is found that the textured coating contains asbestos, removal needs to be carried out by an approved contractor. Cleaning and re-painting is safe as long as the surface is in good condition and not sanded down.

Do not attempt to remove, sand, scrape, wire brush, or drill a textured coating unless it has been tested and confirmed that it does not contain asbestos.

Insulation board which is often used internally as panelling or boxing is softer and less dense than cement products. If it is in good condition it presents no risk but it can be more easily damaged allowing fibres to be released. Where found internally, it will be given a higher priority for removal or sealing in place. Removal of insulation board containing asbestos can only be done by licensed contractors.

Do not attempt to remove, sand, scrape, wire brush, or drill insulation board containing asbestos.

Asbestos waste.

Asbestos cement sheets, whole or broken, are often found in gardens as debris from previous sheds or even used by some as fencing. You can have these removed on request.

Do not place asbestos waste in “wheelie bins” - it must be disposed of in a safe manner to a licensed tip and reported to HMO.

How we manage asbestos

Housing Leeds carries out an asbestos survey before any work is carried out to register all asbestos-containing materials in properties that we manage.

We will be carrying out regular re-inspections to the communal areas of buildings to make sure any asbestos containing materials are in a safe condition and the register is up-to-date.

This will make sure that customers, contractors and visitors remain safe.

After getting a survey result back, we will do one of the following, depending on the risk:

- Record and manage – items that are generally in a good condition, sealed and do not threaten the release of fibres.
- Seal / record and manage – certain asbestos materials are made safe by sealing and bonding which will reduce or stop the release of fibres.
- Remove as part of a maintenance plan – in some cases it is more practical to remove the material as part of a larger maintenance plan on a number of homes at the same time.
- Remove immediately – if the type of asbestos, location or condition has a high risk, we will take immediate action to have the material removed.

We will not remove an asbestos containing material unless it is absolutely necessary because the risk of release is higher than just sealing and monitoring the material.

If you are planning home improvements or maintenance and think you have asbestos in your home; always ask our permission so we can check our records and tell you if any asbestos is present or arrange for a hazardous materials survey to be carried out.

You can contact your local Housing Leeds office for advice about seeking permission for DIY work or contact our Housing Leeds Asbestos Team 0113 3781123.

I've bought my home

If you bought your home after 2006, it is possible that we hold asbestos survey details. If you require this information, then your request needs to be in writing. Contact Housing Leeds Asbestos Team 0113 3781123.

When you become a home owner, you are responsible for the asbestos containing materials in your home – please contact Housing Leeds Asbestos Team 0113 3781123 for more information.

If you don't take the precautions stated in this guide, you could be putting yourself and others at risk.

Advice for leaseholders

Under the terms of your lease, you are responsible for all fixtures and fittings within your property, which includes:

- Artex
- Textured paint finishes
- Bath panels
- Floor tiles

Please contact the Health and Safety Executive via their website at www.hse.gov.uk OR for accredited asbestos survey companies please use the UKAS website at www.ukas.com.

Things to remember.

- Asbestos containing products which are in good condition and not disturbed do not pose a risk to your health.
- Try to ensure that anything you think may contain asbestos remains in good condition.
- Before carrying out DIY work, always consult Housing Leeds Asbestos Team 0113 3781123.
- Don't drill, sand or scrape anything you think may contain asbestos.
- Seek advice from your local Housing Repairs and Maintenance Officer who is available through Housing Leeds Offices
- Always soak wallpaper before removing, if possible use a steam stripper.
- Don't try to remove textured coatings from ceilings. Wash any areas of flaking paint before repainting.
- Don't try to remove old floor tiles.
- If you suspect that asbestos containing materials have been damaged please contact Housing Leeds Asbestos Team 0113 3781123 immediately.
- If you don't know what a material is made from, assume that it contains asbestos.



Asbestos in the home
Designed by Marketing and Communications Team
June 2016



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL