

# Asbestos: Your guide to staying safe



This is a guide to asbestos. It tells you what you need to know about asbestos – what it is, where you might find it in your home, how it affects health and what we can do to make it safe.

There's no need to worry. Even if you do have asbestos in your home and it is in good condition, it is not usually a problem. Asbestos is only dangerous if it gets damaged or disturbed during work to your home.

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the name given to a group of minerals that occur naturally in rock. Three main types of asbestos were used in the UK including blue (Crocidolite), brown (Grunerite) and white (Chrysotile), though colours can be misleading because paint additives, industrial process or time mean they could be any colour.

## Why was asbestos used in buildings?

Asbestos was used in buildings because it's very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. It was used a lot in building materials particularly in the 1960s and

1970's but any building built before 2000 may contain asbestos.

## Why is asbestos dangerous to people?

Asbestos only becomes dangerous when it's damaged or disturbed. That's when it releases invisible fibres into the air. If we breathe these fibres in they can get stuck in the tissues of the chest or lungs. This can cause diseases such as:

- **Asbestosis** - this is scarring of the lungs.
- **Lung Cancer** - this cancer is more frequent among smokers.
- **Mesothelioma** - this is cancer of the lining of the lungs or stomach.

## Ask before you DIY!

You must contact us first if you're planning home improvements. We can check our records and see if your home is likely to contain asbestos and where it is.

If you or anyone else carries out work on your home without our permission, you may have to pay to get the asbestos cleaned up and made safe.

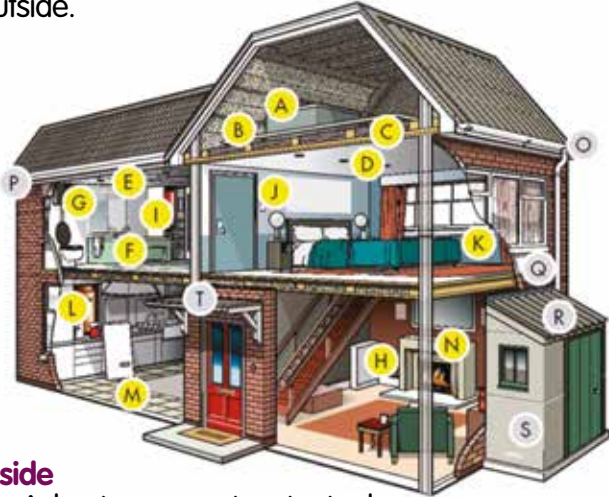
**Remember**, this is an important part of your tenancy agreement and if you don't let us know about your DIY plans you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement.

Always tell us if you accidentally damage walls, ceilings or floors or if you find damage.



## Do I have asbestos in my home?

This picture below shows you the places asbestos may have been used in a property, both inside and outside.



### Inside

- a) Asbestos cement water tanks
- b) Pipe lagging
- c) Loose fill insulation
- d) Textured decorative coatings
- e) Asbestos Insulated Board (AIB) in ceiling tiles
- f) Asbestos Cement Bath Panel
- g) Toilet seat and cistern
- h) AIB behind fuse box
- i) AIB airing cupboard and/or Sprayed insulation coating boiler
- j) AIB partition wall
- k) AIB interior window panel
- l) AIB around boiler
- m) Vinyl Floor tiles
- n) AIB behind fire

### Outside

- o) Asbestos cement gutters and down pipes
- p) Soffits AIB or Asbestos Cement
- q) AIB exterior window panel
- r) Asbestos cement roof
- s) Asbestos cement panels
- t) Roofing felt

[www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/building.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/building.htm)

**Man-made mineral fibre (MMMf) loft or cavity wall insulation does NOT contain asbestos.**

### Asbestos advice

Don't do any DIY that may disturb the fabric of the building. Don't remove partition walls, or sand artex (textured) walls or ceilings. Don't drill, saw or strip any area that might contain asbestos. Remember that floor tiles containing asbestos may be underneath floor coverings and should not be disturbed.

- Don't panic! It's usually only a problem if it's disturbed or becomes damaged.
- Don't disturb any damaged area or product that might contain asbestos.
- Don't dust, sweep or vacuum dirt or debris that might contain asbestos.
- Don't remove asbestos lagging, spray coatings or insulation board.
- If in doubt, call us and we'll get a specialist to review it then we'll take action. In any case we will keep you informed so you don't need to worry.

### Leave it to us

If you think you have asbestos in your home we will check our records and, if necessary, arrange for a survey of your property. We may take a sample of any area we suspect contains asbestos and send it to a laboratory for analysis. Depending on the results we may then cover it with a special protective paint, boarding or arrange for it to be removed.

### How are we making homes safe?

If asbestos is not damaged and still doing its job by strengthening and fire-proofing, it's safest to leave it in place. This is what the law and government policy says is best practice.

Where asbestos is a hazard, we'll make it safe by enclosing it or removing it.

We carry out surveys on a sample of our homes to find out if they contain asbestos. We'll let you know when our fully trained asbestos surveyors are going to be carrying out these surveys. We'll also tell you about the results.

If we find asbestos in your home, we'll take one of these actions depending on the level of risk:

- We'll remove it.
- We'll enclose, cap or seal it.
- We'll manage the information so any contractors asked to work on your property know where it is so they do not disturb it.

If we need to remove the asbestos, we'll let you know where it is and what to do in the meantime. But remember, it's not a risk unless it's disturbed or damaged.

### Contacts us

**Tel:** 0800 218 2000 **Local rate:** 0161 909 6559

#### Online

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