
FACTSHEET

ASBESTOS

Introduction

The issue of asbestos can cause people to worry about how safe their home is. However, there are lots of things you need to consider.

We've put together some useful information, including what asbestos is, where you might find it in your home and what you should do about it.

What's asbestos?

Asbestos is a natural material made up of lots of small fibres. As it's very strong, flexible and resistant to heat and chemicals, it was used in lots of building products and materials between the 1930s and 1980s.

If your home was built during that time, there's a chance there are Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) in your home. Properties built since the mid-1980s are unlikely to contain asbestos at all.

When can asbestos become a problem?

Anything containing asbestos that's undamaged shouldn't be a health risk. If these materials deteriorate with age or are damaged by drilling, sawing or sanding for example, they can release asbestos fibres into the air.

If you were to breath in lots of these fibres, it could damage your lungs.

The general rule is, if asbestos containing materials (ACMs) are in good condition, leave them alone. It's unlikely that the amount of ACMs in your home will be harmful, but you should get advice on what to do if you think asbestos is present, especially if you're planning DIY work as this'll agitate ACMs and release asbestos fibres.

 **The greater the exposure, the greater the risk – but it's important to remember: THERE IS NO SAFE EXPOSURE.**

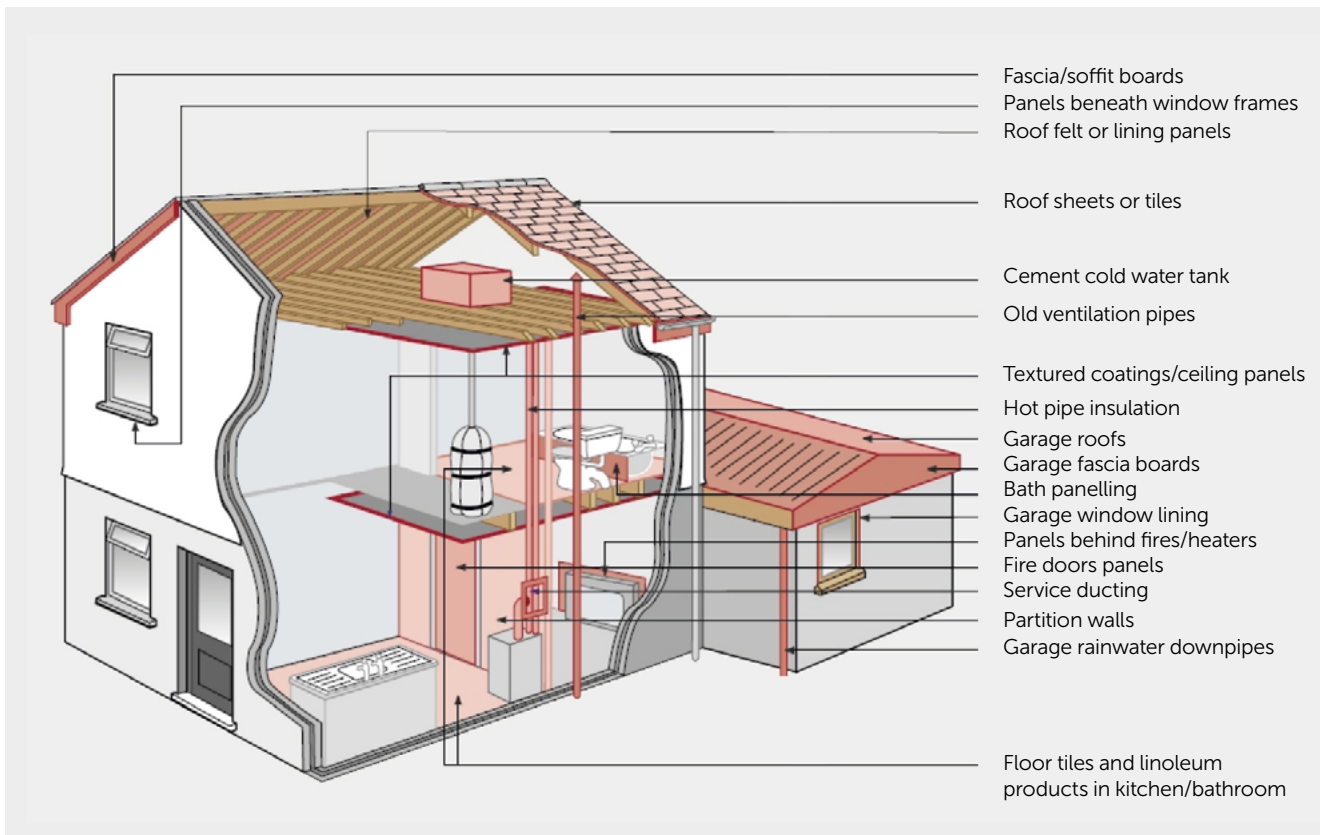
Where might I find asbestos in the home?

There are three main types of asbestos that you might find in your home if it was built between the 1930s and 1980s:

- blue asbestos (crocidolite)
- brown asbestos (amosite)
- white asbestos (chrysotile)

The diagram below shows the most common places that asbestos might be found, although this isn't exhaustive.

Asbestos was also used in some heat-resistant products such as oven gloves and ironing boards, but its use in most products was banned in 1993.



Some textured coatings (commonly known as Artex) contain asbestos fibres. They're normally well bonded and the fibres aren't easily released.

Newer types of textured coatings don't contain asbestos, but they look the same as older versions.

! If you have a textured coating in your home, **DON'T** attempt to remove, sand, scrape, wire brush or drill it yourself – contact us for advice.

What should I do if I think there's asbestos in my home?

If you're in any doubt about whether there's asbestos in your home or its condition, contact us for advice.

Don't panic if there's asbestos in your home as it's usually only a problem when it's damaged, disturbed or deteriorates with age. You should never remove or work on asbestos materials and if you're unsure if a material contains asbestos, it's safer to presume it does and don't tamper with it.

Where it's necessary to remove asbestos materials, you must contact us. Never attempt to remove asbestos materials from your home yourself or put asbestos materials in wheelie bins. This work must be carried out by a contractor with a special licence issued by the government. They must follow strict regulations to make sure that asbestos is removed and disposed of safely.

If you want to carry out any home improvements that may disturb an asbestos containing material, you must contact us for permission to ensure that proper controls are in place to reduce potential exposure to you, your family and the person carrying out the work. If anyone is carrying out work for you in your home, you must make them aware of the presence of any asbestos materials in your house.

If you carry out any work or allow others to carry out work without written approval from us, you'll be liable for any costs of dealing with any asbestos incidents.

Leaseholders and shared owners are responsible for all fixtures and fittings within their property. Items you believe contain asbestos should be left

in place and not disturbed if in good condition. However, if you decide to remove asbestos materials, we'd advise you contact an asbestos removal contractor licensed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to carry out any removal.

- ✓ Do treat asbestos containing materials with respect
- ✓ Do contact us if you wish to carry out DIY on asbestos materials
- ✓ Do contact us immediately if you believe materials containing asbestos have been damaged or disturbed.

- ! **Don't panic if you have asbestos in your home. It's only a problem if it becomes damaged or disturbed**
- ! **Don't damage or remove materials containing asbestos**
- ! **Don't sand down or scrape Artex or insulating boards**
- ! **Don't drill or cut asbestos materials, dust or vacuum debris that may also contain asbestos**
- ! **Don't try to remove old floor tiles. Leave them in place and lay new floor coverings over them**

What responsibilities does my landlord have?

We acknowledge the serious health hazards associated with exposure to asbestos fibres and accept our responsibility under current and future legislation to protect our customers and anyone else who might be exposed to asbestos in our properties.

We're committed to making sure that all materials containing asbestos in your home are safe and we have an asbestos management policy which sets out how we identify and manage asbestos in our properties.

We hold a list of properties where asbestos has been found or is believed to exist which is updated when we survey our properties to locate any materials suspected to contain asbestos.

It's not reasonable or necessary to remove all asbestos materials from every building. Asbestos containing material that's undamaged and in good condition will remain where it is and its condition reviewed. This is fully in line with current government policy and the law.

Asbestos containing materials that are slightly damaged can sometimes be repaired by sealing or enclosing the material.



Never try to do this yourself. Contact us and we'll make the necessary arrangements.

Any asbestos-containing materials that are badly damaged or deteriorating will be removed by a licensed asbestos removal contractor.

If you think you have any materials that fall under this category, please contact us.

 longhurst-group.org.uk/contact

Where major projects are taking place, tenants and leaseholders are formally consulted as a group and advised on the full process, such as how the asbestos will be removed and, if necessary, what precautions are needed and for how long.

Leaseholders must make their own arrangements for removal unless the work is part of a major project.

Asbestos should never be put into wheelie bins. You must ask us for advice about making arrangements for collection and/or disposal at a designated site.