



- **Do** keep activities to a minimum in any areas having damaged material that may contain asbestos and take every precaution to avoid damaging asbestos material.
- **Do** have removal and major repair done by people qualified in handling asbestos. It is recommended that sampling and minor repair also be done by asbestos professionals.



- **Don't** dust, sweep, or vacuum debris that may contain asbestos.
- **Don't** saw, sand, scrape, or drill holes in asbestos materials.
- **Don't** use abrasive pads or brushes on power strippers to strip wax from asbestos flooring. Never use a power stripper on a dry floor.
- **Don't** sand or try to level asbestos flooring or its backing. When asbestos flooring needs replacing, install new floor covering over it, if possible.
- **Don't** track material that could contain asbestos through the house. If you cannot avoid walking through the area, have it cleaned with a wet mop. If the material is from a damaged area, or if a large area must be cleaned, call an asbestos professional.

When contacting asbestos removal firms, be sure to ascertain that they are properly certified to do the work.

Ban Asbestos Committee
 Saskatchewan Federation of Labour
 220-2445 13th Avenue
 Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 0W1
www.sfl.sk.ca



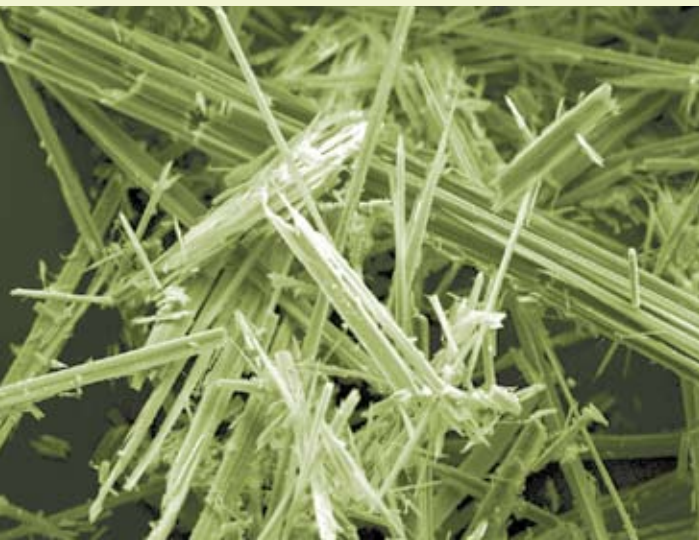
Asbestos: Is it in your home?



Asbestos is a mineral fiber once added to a variety of products to add strength and provide heat insulation and fire resistance.

Exposure to high levels of asbestos fibers can lead to an increased risk of:

- **Lung cancer;**
- **Mesothelioma**, a cancer of the lining of the chest and the abdominal cavity; and
- **Asbestosis**, in which the lungs become scarred with fibrous tissue.



The risk of lung cancer and mesothelioma increases with the number of fibers inhaled. The risk of lung cancer from inhaling asbestos fibers is greater if you smoke.

People who get asbestosis have usually been exposed to high levels of asbestos for a long time. The symptoms of these diseases do not usually appear until about 20 to 30 years after the first exposure to asbestos.

Most people exposed to small amounts of asbestos, as we all are in our daily lives, do not develop these health problems. However, if disturbed, asbestos material may release asbestos fibers, which can be inhaled into the lungs. The fibers can remain there for a long time, increasing the risk of disease.

Asbestos material that would crumble easily if handled, or that has been sawed, scraped, or sanded into a powder, is more likely to create a health hazard.

Where can I find asbestos & when can it be a problem?

Most products made today do not contain asbestos. Those few products made which still contain asbestos that could be inhaled are required to be labeled as such.

However, until the 1970s, many types of building products and insulation materials used in homes contained asbestos.

Common products that might have contained asbestos in the past, and conditions which may release fibers, include:

- Roofing and siding shingles made of asbestos cement.
- Insulation in houses built between 1930 and 1950.
- Textured paint and in patching compounds used on wall and ceiling joints. Their use was banned in 1977.
- Artificial ashes and embers used in gas-fired fireplaces.
- Older products such as stove-top pads.
- Walls and floors around woodburning stoves — these may be protected with asbestos paper, millboard, or cement sheets.
- Some vinyl floor tiles and the backing on vinyl sheet flooring and adhesives.
- Coatings or blankets on hot water and steam pipes in older houses.
- Insulation on oil or coal furnaces and door gaskets.

What should be done about asbestos in the home?

If you think asbestos may be in your home, **don't panic**. Usually the best thing is to leave asbestos material that is in good condition alone.

Generally, material in good condition will not release asbestos fibers.

Check material regularly if you suspect it may contain asbestos. Don't touch it, but look for signs of wear or damage such as tears, abrasions, or water damage. Damaged material may release asbestos fibers. This is particularly true if you often disturb it by hitting, rubbing, or handling it, or if it is exposed to extreme vibration or air flow.

Sometimes the best way to deal with slightly damaged material is to limit access to the area and not touch or disturb it. Discard damaged or worn asbestos gloves, stove-top pads, or ironing board covers. Check with local health, environmental, or other appropriate officials to find out proper handling and disposal procedures.

If asbestos material is more than slightly damaged, or if you are going to make changes in your home that might disturb it, repair or removal by a professional is needed. Before you have your house remodeled, find out whether asbestos materials are present.

Asbestos do's and don'ts

If the asbestos material is in good shape and will not be disturbed, do nothing! If it is a problem, there are two types of corrections: repair and removal.

Repair usually involves either sealing or covering asbestos material.

Sealing (encapsulation) involves treating the material with a sealant that either binds the asbestos fibers together or coats the material so fibers are not released. Pipe, furnace and boiler insulation can sometimes be repaired this way. This should be done only by a professional trained to handle asbestos safely.

Covering (enclosure) involves placing something over or around the material that contains asbestos to prevent release of fibers. Exposed insulated piping may be covered with a protective wrap or jacket.

Removal is usually expensive method and should be the last option in most situations, because removal poses the greatest risk of fiber release. However, removal may be required when remodeling or making major changes to your home that will disturb asbestos material. Removal may be necessary if asbestos material is damaged extensively and cannot be otherwise repaired.

Removal is complex and must be done only by a contractor with special training. Improper removal may actually increase the health risks to you and your family.

