

# Home Safety - Asbestos



While well-maintained asbestos in your home does not pose a health risk, if any of it has to be removed, or is damaged as part of DIY work in your home, it can be dangerous to the health of your household. That is why it is very important that all Council tenants seek permission from their local area housing office before carrying out any alterations in their home. As part of considering your request for permission your home may be visited and the area where you wish to carry out work inspected by housing services staff to ensure that there is no danger caused by asbestos.

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the common name given to a group of natural minerals made up of many small fibres.



It was widely used in building materials from 1930 until about 1980, mainly to insulate properties and protect them against fire. Asbestos concrete was also used to make roof slates, rain water gutters, downpipes and decorative plaster finishes. This means that houses and flats built or refurbished in this period may contain some asbestos materials.

Asbestos-containing materials (ACM) are unlikely to have been used in properties built since the mid-1980s, and from 1999 the use of asbestos in products has been banned.

## When is asbestos a problem?

Generally speaking asbestos is not dangerous. It only becomes dangerous if asbestos-containing materials are damaged or deteriorate with age. When damaged asbestos releases tiny fibres into the air. Breathing in these fibres can cause serious damage to the lungs.

## Where in my home could I find asbestos?

Asbestos is most commonly found in:

- Facia and soffit boards
- Panels beneath window frames
- Roof felt or lining panels
- Roof sheets or tiles
- Roof cement cold water tank
- Old ventilation pipes
- Textured coatings and ceiling panels
- Hot pipe insulation
- Garage roofs
- Bath panelling
- Garage window lining
- Panels behind fires or heaters
- Fire door panels
- Service ducting
- Partition walls
- Garage rainwater downpipes
- Floor tiles and linoleum
- Garage fascia boards



## **What do I do if I find asbestos?**

If you think any material contains asbestos, or if you think your home contains damaged asbestos material, then don't try to deal with it yourself. Contact The Housing Repairs Centre on 01738 476000.

Never drill, sand, saw or disturb any asbestos-containing materials which are in good condition.

## **Can I remove asbestos from my home?**

Sometimes it is necessary to remove asbestos materials, but this work should only be carried out by a contractor with a special licence issued by the Government. They must follow strict regulations to make sure asbestos is removed and disposed of safely.