

Tenants` advice for asbestos in the home

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral which can be found in rocks all over the world, including Scotland.

Asbestos fibres are strong and flexible with excellent fire proofing and insulating qualities and were commonly added to building materials between 1930s and the late 1990s. Peak use was in 1963, and use of asbestos in the construction industry was finally banned in the UK in 1999.

Almost all buildings constructed or altered during this period are likely to have some asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in roofs, claddings, soffits, window cills, bath panels, chimneys/flues, water tanks, floor tiles and textured coatings (Artex or similar).

The three main types of asbestos which were used in the UK are crocidolite (blue asbestos), amosite (brown asbestos) and chrysotile (white asbestos).

White asbestos, the least dangerous of the three, is the type most likely to be found in your home.

It is not possible to tell whether a material contains asbestos simply by looking at it.

Why is asbestos dangerous?

Generally, asbestos is only a risk if you disturb or damage it and cause fibres to be released into the air.

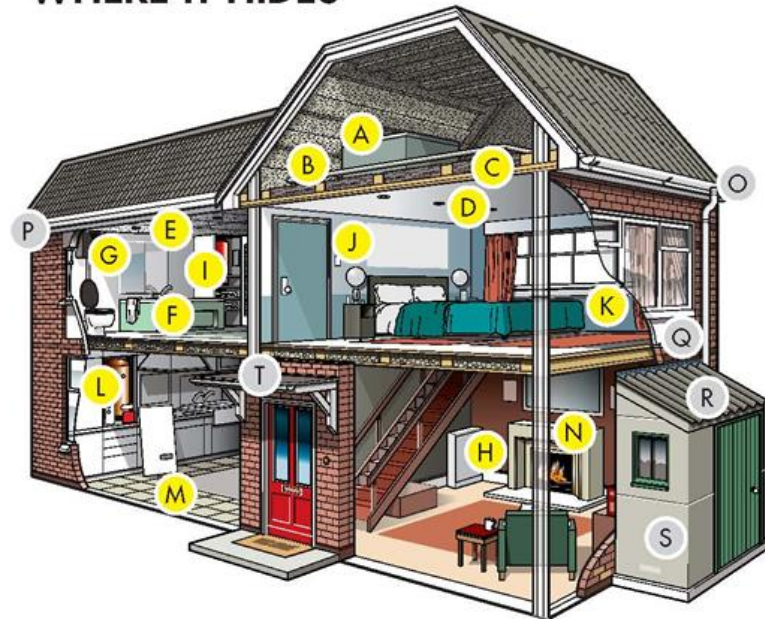
If ACMs are in good condition and in a position where they are not going to be disturbed or damaged, then it is safer to leave them where they are and ensure that the risks are managed.

The greatest risk arises when ACMs are sawn, drilled, sanded or scrubbed. Asbestos fibres released during these activities cannot be seen with the naked eye. DIY work can result in brief but high levels of exposure to asbestos.

Remember, there is no safe level of exposure to asbestos, so you should not attempt to saw, drill or sand any walls, ceilings or floors in your home.

Where might asbestos be in your home?

ASBESTOS WHERE IT HIDES



Inside

- A. Asbestos cement Water tank
- B. Pipe lagging
- C. Loose fill insulation
- D. Textured decorative coating eg artex
- E. AIB ceiling tiles
- F. AIB bath panel
- G. Toilet seat and cistern
- H. AIB behind fuse box
- I. AIB airing cupboard linings and/or sprayed insulation coating to boiler
- J. AIB partition wall
- K. AIB interior window panel
- L. AIB around boiler
- M. Vinyl floor tiles
- N. AIB behind fire

Outside

- O. Gutters and asbestos cement downpipes
- P. Soffits – AIB or asbestos cement
- Q. AIB exterior window panel
- R. Asbestos cement roof
- S. Asbestos cement panels
- T. Roofing felt

(AIB = Asbestos Insulating Board)

Asbestos might typically be found in roofs, claddings, soffits, window cills, bath panels, chimneys/flues, water tanks, floor tiles and textured coatings (Artex or similar).

As you can see above there are many products, but this list is not exhaustive.

What you should do if you suspect there is asbestos in your home?

If it is in good condition and cannot be easily disturbed it is best to leave it alone. However, if you are concerned about any material within your home you should contact the **Customer Service Centre on 0800 028 2755**

Argyll Community Housing Association has a dedicated Asbestos Co-ordinator/Deputy who can arrange for a team to analyse the material and inform you if it is asbestos. We will also inspect the condition of the asbestos material, and if it is damaged or has started to deteriorate we will remove or seal it to stop fibres escaping.

How we will manage asbestos in your home.

- Every property is tested for Asbestos when it becomes empty as part of our ongoing programme to gather an accurate picture of the type and amount of asbestos in our properties.
- We will hold details of “Asbestos Surveys” within the asbestos register.
- Properties will be inspected again from time to time depending on the types of asbestos found and the level of risk.
- Remember, if the asbestos is in good condition and is unlikely to be disturbed or damaged, it does not pose a risk to your health and we will leave it in place. We may seal materials containing asbestos to stop any fibres escaping and action any further works required to make the area safe.
- If we need to remove asbestos from your home, we will keep you informed about the work and what you need to do to ensure the safety of your family.

Home Improvements

If you are planning home improvements, please remember that you will need to get permission from the Association for anything other than decoration.

If you think you may have asbestos in your home and wish to carry out an improvement to this area, please always talk to us first. We can check our records and tell you if any asbestos is present in your home or arrange for our specialist contractors to carry out an asbestos survey.

Please contact your local repairs team to discuss before starting any works.

DIY Rules

- Do not drill, saw, scrub or sand anything you think may contain asbestos.
- Keep activities to a minimum in any areas where material may contain asbestos.
- Do not dust, sweep or vacuum debris that may contain asbestos.
- Take every precaution to avoid damaging asbestos materials or asbestos containing products.

Frequently Asked Questions

If there are asbestos containing materials in my home, why not remove it straight away?

Needlessly disturbing asbestos containing materials that are in good condition may produce dust and could increase health risks.

When we survey homes to find out whether there are asbestos containing materials present, we also check the condition of the material.

Materials in good condition do not cause health problems. If materials are in poor condition, we will consider removing them or sealing them. However, when we need to do building work on your home, disturbing asbestos may be unavoidable. If so, we would look at how we could safely remove the material.

I think I may have disturbed or damaged some asbestos containing materials in my home – what should I do?

Contact the **Customer Service Centre on 0800 028 2755** and we will arrange to have the material inspected and assessed. We will then decide what action is required to make it safe.

I've been told that Artex contains asbestos. What is it and is it safe?

Artex is a textured coating that has been widely used in domestic properties on interior walls and ceilings. Older types of Artex coatings sometimes contain a small amount of asbestos. Artex is safe as long as it is left alone – it is very hard and over the years has been coated with layers of paint.

Can I redecorate walls and ceilings coated with old Artex?

You can paint walls and ceilings coated with Artex, but do not sand or scrape the Artex surface. If you notice any damaged areas, please contact us for advice.

I have a garage and think the roof may be asbestos, what do I do?

If the garage is your own, then it will be your responsibility to have the material checked and removed or sealed to protect the fibres. However, if the garage is Association owned then we will carry out a survey and pending the results will either remove the damaged section(s) or seal it so that fibres are not released.

If you are unsure, please contact your local repairs team for further advice.

I have noticed some broken pieces of vinyl floor tiles that I think may contain asbestos. Is my health at risk?

No, even broken pieces of tile don't produce much dust, so there should be little health risk. But contact us and we will have them removed safely.

Who to Contact?

If you have any concerns about asbestos in your home, please contact **Customer Service Centre on 0800 028 2755**