

Many heating appliances e.g. warm air heating systems, electric storage heaters (up to 1976) flameless catalytic gas heaters (up to 1988) and some early coal effect gas fires may contain asbestos. Asbestos was also used in oven gloves, ironing boards, cooker door seals, fire blankets and vehicle brake pads/lining.

#### How can I identify products or materials containing asbestos?

1. Since 1976 British manufacturers have put labels on all products containing asbestos. Since 1986 all such products carry the European label.
2. The supplier or manufacturer of the product may be able to tell you if it contains asbestos.
3. If you neighbours' houses were built at the same time they may have information about previous surveys for asbestos.
4. Seek advice from Environmental Health telephone 0115 931 6040 or email [environmentalhealth@erewash.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@erewash.gov.uk).

#### What action should I take if I suspect there is asbestos in my home?

Asbestos materials which are in good condition are often best left alone since removal can lead to more fibre release. Check the condition of the asbestos material from time to time to ensure that it has not been damaged or started to deteriorate.

If you have identified asbestos materials in your home always inform builders or maintenance contractors before they start work.

Slightly damaged asbestos materials may be repaired by sealing or enclosing the material. Seek advice on the most appropriate action.

Badly damaged or deteriorating asbestos material can release dust and should be removed. Sprayed asbestos, lagging or insulating boards must always be removed by licensed contractors. If you wish to check whether a contractor is licensed you should contact the Health and Safety Executive on 0115 971 2800.

Remember - It is dangerous to remove fire protection materials without replacing them with a suitable alternative.

- Avoid disturbing or damaging asbestos materials which are in good condition.
- If you have damaged or deteriorating asbestos materials in your home SEEK ADVICE.
- Do not use oven gloves or other small items containing asbestos - dispose of them safely.

Small amounts of asbestos materials may be taken to the Derbyshire County Council Civic Amenity Sites. For advice contact 'Call Derbyshire' on **08456 058 058**. Small items should be sealed in strong plastic bags and marked ASBESTOS. Large items should not be broken up, but wrapped in polythene sheeting or similar material and then disposed of as asbestos waste.

# Asbestos

**Large print, taped or other language versions of all or any part of this leaflet can be made available on request. Please telephone 0115 931 6040.**

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Erewash Borough Council

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Pollution Section EL01



## Asbestos in the Home

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral composed of strong fibres which are resistant to heat and chemicals. For these reasons asbestos was used in a wide variety of building materials and products, often in fire-proofing.

Why may asbestos be a problem?

When products containing asbestos age or become damaged in some way they may release microscopic asbestos fibres in the air. These fibres can be breathed into the lung where they may remain for a considerable time possibly causing damage. When very high levels of fibres are breathed in (this situation would normally only occur during occupational exposure) the damage caused may become apparent as lung disease or cancer.

Health and Safety legislation now protects persons at work, but people who previously worked with asbestos over many years and those who washed their dusty clothing may be affected.

Is everyone exposed to asbestos?

Products containing asbestos have been widely used for many years and for this reason there are low levels of fibres present in the air. Exposure to these levels of fibres are unlikely to harm people's health.

Fibre levels may be higher in buildings containing asbestos materials, particularly if some of the materials are damaged. Even so it is unlikely that the fibre levels will be harmful. Nevertheless if you have damaged asbestos materials in your home you should seek advice on the appropriate action to take.

Large amounts of asbestos fibre may be released during DIY work. For this reason try not to raise dust when working with materials which may contain asbestos and avoid sanding and drilling such materials.

How do I know whether my house contains asbestos?

What materials/products contain asbestos?

Building materials containing asbestos were commonly used from the 1930's to the 1980's. The period from the 1960's onwards saw the most intensive use. The houses and flats built or refurbished during this period may contain asbestos materials.

Asbestos has also been used in heat resistant household items (oven gloves, ironing boards etc) but its use was phased out in the mid 1980's and has been banned in most products since 1993.

It is not easy to tell whether a product contains asbestos as modern asbestos-free alternatives look similar. However it is usually older products that contain asbestos. Loft or cavity wall insulation does not contain asbestos. The following types of asbestos materials may be found in homes:-

- Insulation board (asbestos content 20-45%)  
Used for fire protection, heat and sound insulation. Particularly common in 1960's and 1970's system-built housing. Found in ducts, infill panels, ceiling tiles, wall lining, bath panels and partitions. Unlikely to be found in buildings constructed after 1982.

- Lagging (asbestos content 55-100%)

Used as thermal insulation on pipes and boilers in public buildings and system-built flats during the 1960's to early 1970's. Usually found in boiler houses and heating plants. Asbestos lagging is very rarely found in homes, especially those constructed after the mid 1970's. The use of asbestos for thermal insulation was banned in 1986.

- Sprayed coating (asbestos content up to 85%)  
Sprayed asbestos coatings were used for fire protection of structural steel and were commonly used in system-built flats constructed during the 1960's. The coatings were mainly used in the core of the building i.e. service ducts, lift shafts etc. Use of sprayed coatings stopped in 1974 and was prohibited in 1986. Many buildings containing sprayed asbestos have had the materials removed or sealed to prevent fibres being released.

- Asbestos-Cement Product (asbestos content mainly 10-15% but sometimes up to 40%)

Asbestos-cement is the most widely used asbestos material. It is found in many types of building as profiled sheets for roofing and wall cladding, flat sheets for linings to walls and ceilings, in bath panels, soffit boards, fire surrounds, flue pipes, cold water tanks and as roofing tiles and slates. It has been commonly used as roofing and cladding for garages, sheds and commercial buildings and also as guttering and rain water pipes. Use has declined since 1976 but asbestos cement is still being used in roofing and cladding products.

Asbestos-cement products are unlikely to release high levels of fibres because of the way they are made unless subject to extreme abrasion. Weathering may result in the release of a small amount of fibres.

- Other Products

Asbestos has been used in a variety of other building materials. Examples include textured paints and plasters, plastic floor tiles, cushion flooring, roofing felts, tapes, ropes and blankets.