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TRAFFORD HOUSING TRUST

Products Containing Asbestos in the Home



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Products containing asbestos in the home

This leaflet has been produced to address any questions and concerns you may have regarding 'potentially hazardous materials' in your home.

It gives advice on what it is, where it can be found and should a problem occur, how to deal with it.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous mineral first used by the Romans. It has been mined in a number of countries including South Africa, Canada and Russia. A large amount of asbestos material has been commercially imported into Britain over the last 150 years and used in a range of products to enhance their strength and durability.

Asbestos was used because of its many good properties:

- Heat and fire resistance
- Strength and durability
- Non-corrosive – resistant to acids

Because of all these qualities, asbestos fibres were added to a range of materials, which have mainly been used in the construction of buildings from the turn of the last century.

The importing and use of most forms of asbestos was banned in the early 1980's. Further action has since been taken to ban the import, sale and re-use of all types of asbestos material.

Properties built since the mid-1980's are very unlikely to contain any asbestos materials.

Why is asbestos dangerous?

Due to its worldwide use and mining, we are all exposed to very low levels of asbestos in the air we breathe, but it is unlikely to harm people's health. It is also unlikely that levels of asbestos found in our buildings will be harmful, but if you have damaged, suspected asbestos materials in your home you should seek advice from the repairs hotline as to the best course of action to take.

Where might I find asbestos in my home?

It is not always easy to spot materials that contain asbestos on their appearance alone, especially if they have been decorated in some way. Experienced surveyors and health and safety specialists are best able to locate and identify them.

Typical locations of asbestos materials external to the dwelling:

- Eaves/soffits
- Rainwater goods (guttering, fallpipes, soil pipes)
- Flue pipes and terminals
- Hip, ridge and roof tiles
- Corrugated cement sheeting – usually found on outbuildings and garage roofs

Typical locations of asbestos materials internal to the dwellings:

- Textured coating e.g. Artex type decorative coatings (prior to 1990)
- Fire stop panels (inside heater cupboards, drying cupboards and around boilers)
- Floor tiles and adhesive
- WC cistern and seats
- Water storage tanks
- Flue pipes
- Electrical mains distribution cupboards (fuse box)
- Gasket and rope seals to gas and solid fuel fires
- Bath panels and boxing

Asbestos has also been used in other household products such as oven gloves and ironing boards. The use of asbestos within these products ceased in the mid-1980's.

Since 1986, all materials containing asbestos have to be clearly labelled, and since 1993, the use of asbestos in most products has been banned.

Advice and Guidance

Trafford Housing Trust seeks to maintain your property to a high standard and any materials containing asbestos are most likely to be in good condition and are unlikely to pose any significant risk to your health.

However, you could be potentially at risk when carrying out DIY or minor building repairs. If you are at all concerned please contact the repairs hotline for advice.

If material containing asbestos is damaged:

Don't Panic

- Contact the repairs hotline and explain the problem

Do Not

- Attempt to repair any damage or clean up any debris yourself
- Sweep up or use a domestic vacuum cleaner, as this could lift asbestos fibres into the air

Decorating

Some older forms of decorative textured coatings e.g. Artex type decorative coatings are known to contain small amounts of asbestos.

Please seek advice prior to these surfaces being disturbed.

Do Not

- Attempt to remove these types of coatings. Please seek guidance from the repairs hotline

If you are concerned about any suspect material in your home, do consider that it may contain asbestos until proven otherwise.

You must not carry out structural alterations or improvements to your home unless Trafford Housing Trust has given permission.

Remember

- Asbestos materials which are in good condition and undamaged are not dangerous



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