

Asbestos in the Home

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral fiber. For years, asbestos has been used for a wide range of manufactured goods, mostly in building materials (roofing shingles, ceiling and floor tiles, paper products and asbestos cement products), friction products (automobile clutch, brake and transmission parts), heat-resistant fabrics, packaging, gaskets and coatings.

Could this be a health hazard for me or my family?

Even if asbestos is in your home, this is usually not a serious problem. The mere presence of asbestos in a home or building is not hazardous. The danger is that asbestos-containing materials may become damaged over time. Damaged asbestos may release fibers and become a health hazard. The best thing to do with asbestos that is in good condition is to leave it alone. Disturbing it may create a health hazard where none existed before.

What materials may contain asbestos in my home?

Most products made today do not contain asbestos; however, until the 1970s, many types of building products and insulation materials used in homes contained asbestos. The few products containing asbestos that are still made are required to be labeled. .

Examples of where asbestos hazards may be found in the home

- Some roofing and siding shingles are made of asbestos cement.
- Houses built between 1930 and 1950 may have asbestos as insulation.
- Attic and wall insulation may be produced using vermiculite ore.
- Asbestos may be present in textured paint and in patching compounds used on wall and ceiling joints. Their use was banned in 1977.
- Artificial ashes and embers sold for use in gas-fired fireplaces may contain asbestos.
- Older products such as stove-top pads may have some asbestos compounds.
- Walls and floors around wood-burning stoves may be protected with asbestos paper, millboard, or cement sheets.
- Asbestos is found in some vinyl floor tiles and the backing on vinyl sheet flooring and adhesives.
- Hot water and steam pipes in older houses may be coated with an asbestos material or covered with an asbestos blanket or tape.
- Oil and coal furnaces and door gaskets may have asbestos insulation.

If you are concerned about possible asbestos presence in your home, see EPA's website for more information: <https://www.epa.gov/asbestos>.



What do I do if I need to remove the asbestos from my home?

If asbestos-containing 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 recommended.

DEQ and the Oklahoma Department of Labor have rules for asbestos removal. A licensed asbestos contractor will know these rules and should take care of any paperwork required by these state agencies. While these rules do not apply to residential properties consisting of four or fewer units, they do contain work practices that can help reduce exposure during removal.

The Oklahoma Department of Labor maintains a list of licensed asbestos contractors. The Department of Labor can be contacted at (405) 521-6464, or visit their website at <http://www.ok.gov/odol>.

For additional information, contact DEQ's Air Quality Division at (405) 702-4100 or visit the DEQ Asbestos website at <https://www.deq.ok.gov/divisions/aqd/>.