

ASBESTOS

JANUARY 2022

A guide to Asbestos

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

PENSIONS BOARD



Introduction

This leaflet provides you with information on asbestos; what it is, where it can be found and how we manage it in our homes either when it has been identified through an asbestos survey or if you have concerns about products containing asbestos.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material with good fire and heat resisting properties. Because of its natural strength it became popular in building components. Asbestos fibres were often mixed with other materials such as cement, bitumen and fabrics.

As its health risks became more commonly known, its use in construction was restricted until an eventual ban in 1999. This means that asbestos is commonly found in properties which were built or that underwent refurbishment works prior to 2000, with its popularity peaking in the 1960's and early 1970's.

Should I be alarmed?

Some people are alarmed when they discover asbestos in a building, but you should not panic as in most cases any asbestos in your home is unlikely to be a danger to your health.

- If the asbestos is in a good condition, is undamaged and has not been disturbed, there is unlikely to be any risk to your health.
- It is only if the asbestos is damaged or has been disturbed that fibres could potentially be released and may be harmful to health if inhaled.

How is the Pensions Board managing asbestos in its homes?

As a landlord we need to know which of our properties may contain asbestos, what the condition of it is and whether we can leave it in situ, repair the area or remove it.

Surveys of our homes are undertaken by specialist asbestos consultants. A survey may be carried out when:

- A home is empty or has just been purchased to assist us with planning and undertaking refurbishment works in a safe manner or,
- When works need to take place to occupied homes.

We do not normally undertake asbestos surveys of homes constructed after 2003 as the use of materials containing asbestos had ceased prior to this date.

In most instances we will hold a “Management Survey” for your home. This will include all areas in the property that a consultant can access without the need to cause damage. The survey may include specific targeted areas based on the proposed works to be carried out.

If we are planning to carry out works to your home, it may be necessary for us to arrange a further targeted survey. This may occur when we need a specialist consultant to open-up certain parts of the building fabric or make use of access equipment such as for example, scaffolding, to undertake a closer inspection and to collect samples of materials.

Common locations where Asbestos may be found.

- ✓ Garage/shed roofs and walls
- ✓ Panels behind fires or heaters.
- ✓ Panels fitted to fire doors and the seals around fire doors.
- ✓ Within textured coatings on ceilings and walls (Artex and similar).
- ✓ Facia and soffit boards on the outside of the property.
- ✓ Around boilers and water heaters.
- ✓ Within older toilet cisterns.
- ✓ In older fuse boards.
- ✓ In old rainwater guttering and pipes.
- ✓ Soil and vent pipes.
- ✓ In boiler and heater flues.
- ✓ In partition walls.
- ✓ In stiffening pads below stainless-steel sinks
- ✓ In older vinyl floor tiles and/or the adhesive to fix these down.



What happens to the asbestos surveys held by the Board?

Our asbestos surveys are currently held on an online portal. This means our staff and the contractors we regularly employ, can view these surveys prior to works being carried out in your home.

We are also able to provide copies of these to you as necessary, for your information.

What happens if further work is required?

Most asbestos containing materials found within domestic houses are in a safe condition, meaning no further works are required unless the materials need to be removed to facilitate other works. Occasionally, we may need to reschedule further inspections on a cyclical basis to ensure the asbestos is not deteriorating.

If we identify asbestos is in a poor condition, we will arrange for it to be safely removed.

What happens if asbestos needs to be removed?

If materials containing asbestos need to be removed this is usually undertaken by a specialist contractor. This is because:



- It is likely the removal will break/damage the item being removed, and this could release fibres.
- The material will need to be disposed of at a specialist refuse site which accepts such waste.

Sometimes, the material can be left in situ and working methods are put in place to ensure the safety of staff undertaking the works and residents within their home. For example, if holes need to be drilled into a ceiling which has an asbestos containing textured coating then specialist drills and safety equipment can be used to form the holes (or remove the coating from a small area) rather than the whole ceiling being removed.

What if something containing asbestos gets damaged?

If you damage something containing asbestos or, you discover something containing asbestos has been damaged please notify us immediately and we can arrange for a specialist to attend to investigate and carry out any required works. We would recommend that you do not try and clean up the damaged materials yourself.

Why doesn't the Board just remove all the components containing asbestos and replace them with something else?

If undisturbed asbestos is generally not hazardous and seeking to remove all asbestos may pose a greater risk. For many components the percentage of asbestos making up the item can be quite low. The approach of managing asbestos within its existing location is a well-established one which is recognised by the Health and Safety Executive, current legislation and most landlords.

I am worried about asbestos in my home, what can I do?

If you are worried, and think that there are materials in your home that may contain asbestos **and are damaged or in a poor condition**, please contact the Sanctuary Customer Services Centre either by:



0800 916 1434 or by mobile freephone on 0300 123 3566



cscpb@sanctuary-housing.co.uk

If you would like a copy of the asbestos report for your home, please contact the property service team at the contact details on page 6

What if I want to undertake works to my home?

We understand that you may wish to undertake works to your home yourself. These are called improvements in your tenancy agreement.

Please contact us as early as possible about any proposed work and direct your request to the property services team at the contact details on page 6.

If we give consent for the work, you will need to give your builder a copy of the asbestos report for your home, if this is relevant to the works they are doing.

Contact details

If you have any questions about the content of this leaflet, please get in touch using the details below. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



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