



Asbestos

Asbestos is the name given to a number of naturally occurring, fibrous silicate minerals mined for their useful properties such as thermal insulation, chemical and thermal stability, and high tensile strength. Asbestos is commonly used as an acoustic insulator, thermal insulation, fire proofing and in other building materials. Many products are in use today that contains asbestos.

Asbestos is made up of microscopic bundles of fibers that may become airborne when asbestos-containing materials are damaged or disturbed. When these fibers get into the air they may be inhaled into the lungs, where they can cause significant health problems

Where Can I Find Asbestos And When Can It Be A Problem?

Most products made today do not contain asbestos. Those few products made which still contain asbestos that could be inhaled are required to be labeled as such. However, until the 1970s, many types of building products and insulation materials used in homes contained asbestos. Common products that might have contained asbestos in the past, and conditions which may release fibers, include:

- **STEAM PIPES, BOILERS, and FURNACE DUCTS** insulated with an asbestos blanket or asbestos paper tape. These materials may release asbestos fibers if damaged or removed improperly.
- **RESILIENT FLOOR TILES** (vinyl asbestos, asphalt, and rubber), the backing on **VINYL SHEET FLOORING**, and **ADHESIVES** used for installing floor tile. Sanding tiles can release fibers. So may scraping or sanding the backing of sheet flooring during removal.
- **CEMENT SHEET, MILLBOARD, and PAPER** used as insulation around furnaces and wood burning stoves. Repairing or removing appliances may release asbestos fibers so may cutting, tearing, sanding, drilling, or sawing insulation.
- **DOOR GASKETS** in furnaces, wood stoves, and coal stoves. Worn seals can release asbestos fibers during use.
- **SOUNDPROOFING OR DECORATIVE MATERIAL** sprayed on walls and ceilings. Loose, crumbly, or water-damaged material may release fibers. So will sanding, drilling, or scraping the material.
- **PATCHING AND JOINT COMPOUNDS** for walls and ceilings, and **TEXTURED PAINTS**. Sanding, scraping, or drilling these surfaces may release asbestos.
- **ASBESTOS CEMENT ROOFING, SHINGLES, and SIDING** are not likely to release asbestos fibers unless they are sawed, drilled, or cut.
- **ARTIFICIAL ASHES AND EMBERS** sold for use in gas-fired fireplaces and older household products such as **FIREPROOF GLOVES, STOVE-TOP PADS, IRONING BOARD COVERS, and certain HAIR DRYERS.**
- **AUTOMOBILE BRAKE PADS AND LININGS, CLUTCH FACINGS, and GASKETS**