

# Asbestos

## Information and Safety Instructions

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### Quick Guide

Asbestos is manufactured from naturally occurring silicate minerals. The three types of asbestos that have been used in the UK are crocidolite (blue asbestos), amosite (brown asbestos) and chrysotile (white asbestos).

### The Facts

Once it is mined the rock mineral is crushed, producing fibres. It is the shape and size of asbestos fibres that enables them to penetrate deep into the lungs. Blue and Brown asbestos are thought to be more dangerous as it can be more readily inhaled. You cannot tell the colour of fibres visually as they are combined with other materials and need to be analysed by the laboratory.

### Uses of Asbestos

White asbestos was commonly used in domestic appliances and buildings between the 1950's through to the 1980's.

Brown asbestos was used in thermal insulation up 'til the late 1960's. It was also used in various sprayed applications and insulating boards 'til the late 1970's.

Blue asbestos hasn't been imported into this country since 1972, but was used for insulation lagging and sprayed coatings.

### Common Locations

You may find asbestos in:

- Asbestos cement on garage or shed roofs
- Asbestos cement on shed and garage wall panels
- Asbestos cement drain pipes

- Asbestos cement or insulation board soffit, infill panels and partitions
- Asbestos cement on the side of bath panels
- Roof felt or lining panels
- Roof sheets or tiles
- Asbestos cement cold water tanks
- Old ventilation pipes
- Textured coatings (Artex) and ceiling panels
- Hot water pipe insulation
- Panels behind fires or heaters
- Fire door panels
- Floor tiles and linoleum products in kitchens and bathrooms
- Some old toilet seats and cisterns, (usually black)

Don't panic if you think you have asbestos in your home. Asbestos containing materials (ACM's) in good condition and not disturbed are not a risk to your health. Asbestos is usually only a problem if it's disturbed and fibres are released into the air.

If you think you need advice about asbestos contact Wigan and Leigh Housing asbestos team on 01942 705836.

### Do's and Don'ts

- Do treat asbestos containing products with respect
- Do check the condition of anything you think may contain asbestos from time to time and try to keep it in good condition
- Don't drill, cut, sand or scrape anything you think may contain asbestos, ask the asbestos team for advice
- Don't try to remove textured coatings from ceilings, wash any areas of flaking paint before re-painting
- Don't try to remove old floor tiles or linoleum, leave them in place and lay new floor coverings over them

Precaution should be taken when stripping wallpaper. Always soak wallpaper before removing, if possible use a steam stripper and then gently peel away the paper before re-decorating. This reduces the risk of damaging any asbestos containing materials that may be in place.

If you suspect that asbestos containing materials have been damaged please contact the asbestos team

## Safety

The general rule is to always **leave asbestos containing materials alone**, it's usually safe unless it's damaged or disturbed. If you are in doubt as to whether any materials already in your home contain asbestos, or if you suspect your home contains damaged asbestos material, do not try to deal with it yourself contact the Asbestos Team.

Asbestos materials that are slightly damaged can sometimes be repaired by sealing or enclosing the material. This will depend on the location and the likelihood of the material being damaged or disturbed in the future.

If it is necessary to remove asbestos it will always be done by an accredited company licensed by the Government. We will arrange for someone to visit you and discuss the options.

**Never try to remove asbestos containing materials by yourself.** Always ask for advice from the Asbestos Team.

## Useful Websites

Health and Safety Executive  
[www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos)

Asbestos Information Centre LTD  
[www.aic.org.uk](http://www.aic.org.uk)

Wigan and Leigh Housing  
[www.walh.co.uk](http://www.walh.co.uk)

Wigan Council  
[www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk)



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