

What should I do if I think I have ACMs in my home?

ACMs in good condition that cannot readily be damaged are often best left where they are, as removal can lead to higher levels of fibres in the air.

If you are planning some DIY work or are having some work done to your home and you think you have ACMs in the way, contact us for advice. You should always let your builders know if you have any suspicions, before they start work.

Damaged ACMs

ACMs that are slightly damaged can sometimes be repaired by sealing or enclosing the material. Get advice from one of our Property Officers, they will know what to do.

ACMs that are badly damaged or deteriorating can release dust and should be removed. If you think you have badly damaged ACMs in your home, contact us straight away so a Property Officer can come out and inspect it.

Finally

Asbestos can only be dangerous if you breathe in a lot of the dust particles. If the asbestos is in good condition, there is no reason to worry about it being in your home. Only if it is damaged should you contact a Property Officer, who will come out to inspect it and will decide what needs to be done.

Whatever you do, if you think you have ACMs in your home, don't sand or drill them as that will produce dust and fibres that may be harmful if you breathe them in.

If in doubt, log into your **My Home** account and request a Property Inspection, or contact us by phoning on **01620 825032**, by e-mailing enquiries@elha.com or by visiting elha.com and clicking on the Need Help button.

Asbestos



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Asbestos in buildings

Any homes built before 1999 may have some building materials in them which contain asbestos. These materials are known as Asbestos Containing Materials or ACMs for short.

Is this a problem?

It shouldn't be if the material is in good condition, but when ACMs age or become damaged they can release asbestos fibres into the air. Asbestos fibres in the air can be inhaled into the lungs where they may stay for a long time, and can cause damage or disease.

People who have worked with asbestos for many years as part of their job, or have washed the dusty clothing of those who worked with asbestos, are most likely to be affected.

Is everyone exposed to asbestos?

Yes, there is a very low level of asbestos fibres in the air everywhere because asbestos has been used widely. Exposure to this low level of asbestos is unlikely to harm people's health.

It is also very unlikely that the levels of asbestos fibres found in buildings will be harmful, but if you have damaged ACMs in your home you should seek advice on what to do. What you should not do, is carry out any DIY work to anything that you think might be an ACM. Particularly anything which produces dust, for example: sanding or drilling.

How do I know if I have ACMs in my home?

Since 1976 British manufacturers have put labels on their products to show they contain asbestos, and since 1986 all products containing asbestos carry a European identifying label. If you are in any doubt, our Property Officer will be able to help identify if you have ACM's in your home.

Remember, ACMs can look very similar to those not containing asbestos – if in doubt please seek advice.

Where might I find ACMs in my home?

ACMs were widely used from 1930 to around 1980, particularly from the 1960s onwards. The use of asbestos decreased greatly around the mid-1980s, and since 1993 its use in most products was banned with a final ban in 1999. If your home was built after 1999 it should be free of ACMs.

It is not always easy to tell whether a product contains asbestos as modern asbestos-free materials often look similar - remember it is usually older products that contain asbestos.

The types of ACMs that may be found in homes are described below:

Heating appliances and domestic equipment

Asbestos was used in some warm air heating systems and electric storage heaters up to 1976, in some gas heaters up to 1988, and some early 'coal effect' gas fires

"Artex" and Flooring

Asbestos was used in decorative coatings such as textured paints and plasters, eg: "Artex". These kinds of finishes are still widely used but the use of asbestos in them has not been allowed since 1988. Plastic floor tiles may also contain ACMs but only if they are very old.

Asbestos cement products

Asbestos-cement was the most widely used asbestos material. It is found in many types of building as corrugated sheets for roofing and wall-cladding, in flat sheets and partition boards for linings to walls and ceilings, in bath panels, soffit boards, fire surrounds, flue pipes, cold water tanks and as roofing tiles and slates, guttering and drain pipes. Use declined significantly from 1976.

Asbestos cement products are very unlikely to release high levels of fibres because of the way they are made, unless they are subject to extreme abrasion such as sanding or drilling.

