

# Asbestos information: keeping you safe



Asbestos is a naturally-occurring fibrous material that was widely used as a building material since the 1950s as an insulator and fire protector. It was banned in 1999 but can still be found in buildings and homes today. Breathing in high levels of asbestos fibres can damage your lungs.

The symptoms of asbestos-related disease take many years – even decades – to appear after the original exposure to asbestos, so exposure a long time ago might only be showing up as a disease today. People who have worked with asbestos for many years as part of their job are most likely to be affected.

## Where can asbestos be found?

Some of the places asbestos can be found include:

- ▶ Floor tiles
- ▶ Roof, gutters and rainwater pipes
- ▶ Soffits and fascias
- ▶ Cold water tanks and toilet cisterns
- ▶ Textured wall and ceiling coatings (Artex)
- ▶ Toilet cisterns
- ▶ Asbestos insulating board panels, partitions, door headers, fuseboards
- ▶ Floor voids, loft voids and pipework insulation
- ▶ Lagging on plant and pipework
- ▶ Fireplaces.

## Managing asbestos in your home

If there is asbestos in your home, it's safe if it's left undisturbed and you treat it with respect. If you think you have damaged asbestos in your home, leave it alone and let us know immediately – don't try to remove anything yourself. We will visit your home, look at the material more closely and take action if we need to. Don't drill into, sand, scrape or hammer materials which could contain asbestos. If you're planning on making any improvements to your home or carrying out DIY, you need to write to us first.

If you're a homeowner and there's asbestos in your home, Asbestos Removal Contractors Association can help you find an authorised contractor to remove it.

Visit **[www.arca.org.uk](http://www.arca.org.uk)** for more information.

Don't place asbestos waste into dustbins – it won't be collected as it must be taken to a licensed site.

Contact your local council for more details.

## What RHP is doing

We have an ongoing surveying programme where we record the places where asbestos has been found, removed, or is presumed to be present. If works are likely to damage or disturb asbestos, it's removed by qualified and licensed contractors before work begins. We work closely with contractors to make sure they're aware of any asbestos on site. If we need to remove asbestos as part of major works on your home, we'll let you know.

## In a nutshell

- ▶ Asbestos is only harmful when the fibres become airborne and breathed in
- ▶ Treat asbestos with respect. You can't see or smell asbestos fibres. Samples need to be taken to identify whether something contains asbestos
- ▶ Don't drill, sand, saw or otherwise disturb any material which may contain asbestos
- ▶ If you think something contains asbestos, don't carry out any DIY without contacting us first
- ▶ Asbestos in good condition shouldn't be a risk to you.

**For more information contact us by phone or contact form: [www.rhp.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.rhp.org.uk/contact-us)**