

Asbestos is a naturally occurring material made up of small fibres. It is strong and resistant to heat, which is why it was used widely in the building industry for many years.

From the 1930s to 1980s, asbestos was used in all forms of building. It was used in new properties, factories and schools, as well as for refurbishment of older properties.

Asbestos is unlikely to have been used in properties built after the mid 1980s, and from 1993 its use was banned in most products.

Why is asbestos dangerous?

Asbestos itself is not dangerous. It can only become dangerous if material containing asbestos is damaged; when damaged, the asbestos fibres can get into the air. Breathing in high levels of these fibres can cause serious damage to your lungs.

It is very unlikely that the levels of fibres in your home is dangerous, even if there is material containing asbestos.

The greatest risk arises when material containing asbestos is damaged, drilled, cut, sawn, sanded or scrubbed. DIY work can result in brief but high levels of fibres in the air.

Where is asbestos found?

Asbestos can be found in many forms, and nearly everywhere in a building. Just some of the examples of materials that may contain asbestos are:-

Insulating boards	Rainwater pipes	Lagging
Ceiling tiles	Artex	Corrugated cement sheeting
Floor tiles	Ironing boards and oven gloves	Old storage heaters (pre 1976)

(Cavity wall insulation and loft lagging does not normally contain asbestos)

How can you identify asbestos?

It is difficult for a lay person to recognise asbestos and the materials that contain it. Even a trained surveyor would find it difficult to tell which materials have asbestos in them. Only a specially trained surveyor with access to chemical analysis can tell for sure what contains asbestos.

What is being done about asbestos?

Due to the risks of exposure to asbestos fibres, the Government has made laws to protect people. As a landlord, these laws oblige us to protect residents and employees from the risks of asbestos.

Willow Tree Housing Partnership Limited's (WTHP) policy

WTHP is committed to keeping all of our residents safe. We have conducted a full asbestos survey of our properties, carried out by a trained surveyor. We have identified all of the asbestos in our properties and where it is not safe to leave it in place, we have removed it.

We now have a register which tells us where the remaining asbestos is, what type of material it is, and its condition. Our contractors know what signs to look for and will report to us any material that they suspect may contain asbestos.

Do I have asbestos in my home?

We have informed all residents where we believe that their home contains asbestos.

WTHP keeps a record of all asbestos in every home which is inspected every 5 years to ensure that it is not damaged.

What is the risk to me and my family?

The levels of asbestos in your home are not likely to be harmful. If there is material containing asbestos in your home, and it is in good condition, there is very little risk to you and your family and it is best left undisturbed. If the asbestos has been damaged please call us.

Will the asbestos be removed from my home?

In all cases, where it is safer to remove the asbestos from a home, we have already done that. If you still have asbestos in your home, it is now safer to leave it where it is than to remove it. WTHP does not plan to remove any more asbestos unless it gets damaged; if this happens we will consider removal if this is the safest way to deal with the problem.

Remember

Do treat asbestos with respect.

Do not drill, sand, saw or disturb any material that you think might contain asbestos.

Do not carry out any DIY work on any area where WTHP has told you that there is material that might contain asbestos, speak to us first if you are unsure.

Do soak wallpaper before removing it; if possible use a steam stripper and gently peel away wallpaper.

Do not try to remove textured coating from walls or ceilings.

Do not try to remove old floor tiles or lino; leave in place and lay any new floor coverings over the top.

Do not throw away anything that you think might contain asbestos in the normal rubbish, call us first.

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