

Asbestos... What You Need to Know!

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Asbestos wrapped around Pipes



Asbestos Tiles



Vermiculite - Attic Insulation



Asbestos Clean-Up

Just hearing the word asbestos gives most people a sense of panic and concern. Although asbestos can be a reason for concern. There are a couple of factors that need to be looked at first. One, are you sure it's asbestos? Two, is it friable or non-friable? Third, what condition is it in? There may not even be a reason for any concern.

The info below comes from The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Please visit www.epa.gov/asbestos for additional information.

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral fiber that occurs in rock and soil.

Where Can I Find Asbestos?

Because of its fiber strength and heat resistance asbestos has been used in a variety of building construction materials for insulation and as a fire retardant. Asbestos has also been used in a wide range of manufactured goods, mostly in building materials (roofing shingles, ceiling and floor tiles, paper products, and asbestos cement products), friction products (automobile clutch, brake and transmission parts), heat-resistant fabrics, packaging, gaskets, and coatings.

Where Asbestos May Be Found ?

- Attic and wall insulation produced containing vermiculite.
- Vinyl floor tiles and the backing on vinyl sheet flooring and adhesives
- Roof and siding shingles
- Textured paint and patching compounds used on wall and ceilings.
- Walls and floors around wood-burning stoves protected with asbestos paper, millboard or cement sheets.
- Hot water and steam pipes coated with asbestos material or covered with an asbestos blanket or tape.
- Oil and coal furnaces and door gaskets with asbestos insulation.
- Heat-resistant fabrics
- Automobile clutches and brakes.

How Can People Be Exposed to Asbestos?

Asbestos fibers may be released into the air by disturbance of asbestos-containing material during product use, demolition work, building or home maintenance, repair, and remodeling,

In general exposure may occur only when the asbestos-containing material is disturbed or damaged in some way to release particles and fibers into the air.

Health Effects From Exposure to Asbestos

Exposure to asbestos increased your risk of developing lung disease. That risk is made worse by smoking. In general, the greater the exposure to asbestos, the greater the chance of developing harmful health effects.

Three of the major health effects associated with asbestos exposure are:

- Lung cancer
- Mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer that is found in the thin lining of the lung, chest, abdomen and heart.
- Asbestosis, a serious progressive, long-term, non-cancer disease of the lungs.

What Is Vermiculite?

Vermiculite is a naturally-occurring mineral composed of shiny flakes, resembling mica. When heated to a high temperature, flakes of vermiculite expand as much as 8-30 times their original size. The expanded vermiculite is a light-weight, fire-resistant and odorless material and has been used in numerous products including insulation for attics and walls. Sizes of vermiculite products range from very fine particles to large (coarse) pieces nearly an inch long.



Vermiculite



If

You Have Vermiculite Insulation.

YOU SHOULD ASSUME THE VERMICULITE CONTAINS ASBESTOS AND DO NOT DISTURB IT!! Any disturbance could potentially release asbestos fibers into the air.

If you absolutely have to go in your attic and it contains vermiculite insulation, you should limit the number of trips you make and shorten the length of those trips in order to help limit your potential exposure.

- Leave vermiculite insulation undisturbed in your attic or in the walls.
- Do not store boxes or other items in your attic if it contains vermiculite insulation

We recommend that you:

- Do not allow children to play in the attic with vermiculite insulation.
- Do not attempt to remove the insulation yourself
- Hire a professional asbestos contractor if you plan to remodel or conduct renovations that would disturb the vermiculite in your attic

or walls to make sure the material is safely handled and/or removed.

If You Have An Asbestos Problem

If the asbestos-containing material is more than slightly damaged or could be disturbed, there are two types of action that can be taken by **trained and accredited asbestos professionals**: repair and removal.

Repair usually involves either sealing or covering asbestos material. With any type of repair, the asbestos remains in place.

- Sealing (encapsulation) involves treating the material with a sealant that either binds the asbestos fibers together or coats the material so fibers are not released. Pipe, furnace and boiler insulation can sometimes be repaired this way. This should be done only by a professional trained to handle asbestos safely.

Covering (enclosure) involves placing something over or around the material that contains asbestos to prevent release of fibers. Exposed insulated piping may be covered with a protective wrap or jacket.

Removal may be required when remodeling or making major changes to your home will disturb asbestos containing material. Also, removal may be called for if asbestos-containing material is damaged extensively and cannot be otherwise repaired. Removal is complex and must be done only by a trained and accredited asbestos professional. Improper removal may actually increase your and your family's exposure to asbestos fibers.

Asbestos Professionals: Who Are They and What can They Do?

In general, there are two main types of accredited asbestos professionals that can be hired to handle asbestos-containing material:

- Asbestos Inspectors. These individuals can inspect a home or building, assess conditions, take samples of suspected materials for testing, and advise about what corrections are needed. If repair or removal of asbestos materials is chosen, inspectors can ensure the corrective-action and that the contractor has followed proper procedures, including proper clean up and monitor the air to ensure no increase of asbestos fibers.
- Asbestos Contractors. These professionals can repair or remove asbestos materials.
- Federal Law does not require persons who inspect, repair or remove asbestos-containing materials in detached single-family homes to be trained and accredited; however, some states and localities do require this. [For safety, homeowners should ensure that workers they hire to handle asbestos are trained and accredited].

New York State requires all workers and companies to be licensed.

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