
THE FACTS ABOUT ASBESTOS

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is the name given to a naturally occurring group of minerals composed of tiny, easily inhaled fibers. In the past, asbestos was added to a variety of building materials to provide strength, heat insulation, and fire resistance.

WHERE IS ASBESTOS FOUND?

Asbestos was used in more than 3,000 building products and can be found in homes, public, commercial, and industrial facilities. These materials normally present no problem as long as they are in good condition and are not disturbed.

Products containing asbestos include: insulation on boilers, steam pipes, water pipes and ducts; cementitious siding or roofing shingles; ceiling tile (all forms); asphalt and felt roofing applications; wallboard and mud joint compound; sprayed-on or trowelled-on surface materials on walls or ceilings; insulation (wall or ceiling), floor tiles and sheet vinyl floor coverings, etc.

HEALTH CONCERNS?

Asbestos fibers can cause serious health problems. Breathing airborne asbestos fibers can lead to an increased risk of (1) lung cancer; (2) mesothelioma, a cancer of the lining of the chest or abdominal cavity; and (3) asbestosis, scarring of the lung tissue.

WHAT TO DO?

Minor repairs to asbestos-containing materials can be performed safely by the homeowner. However, removal should not be attempted. Removal is the last choice among alternatives because it poses the most risk of fiber release if not done properly. Proper removal requires special equipment and detailed training which are generally too expensive and time consuming for a homeowner to acquire for a one-time job.

Removal activities should be performed by North Carolina accredited asbestos workers and supervisors. Air monitoring by accredited air monitoring personnel should also be considered to assure that the project is being conducted safely and also to assure that the area where asbestos removal was performed can be reoccupied safely.

WHO TO CALL?

If Asbestos Containing Building Materials in your facility or residence have been disturbed, or **if you need assistance with a renovation or demolition project, please contact the Health Hazards Control Unit at 919-707-5950.**