

## What should you do about asbestos in your home?

Do not panic if you have asbestos materials in your home. Remember, if asbestos materials are in good condition, removal should not be necessary and disturbance by non-specialists could, in fact, cause more risk to the health of you or your family.

Contact the council so it can arrange for a specialist contractor to carry out the work on any notifiable asbestos materials. Do not disturb asbestos materials under any circumstances. If you are in any doubt, phone the Housing Management Support Team on **01634 333601** or on the freephone number **0800 0730073**.

## Dos and don'ts when carrying out DIY

- If you suspect that you have asbestos materials in your home, extra care should be taken when doing DIY.
- Do not attempt work on sprayed asbestos, lagging or insulating boards, as this must be carried out by a licensed asbestos removal contractor. If in doubt, seek advice.
- Do not drill, cut or disturb asbestos. Do not scrape or sand asbestos materials before painting and decorating. Some types of asbestos materials are very soft and can release large numbers of fibres if rubbed or scraped.

## Where can you get further advice?

Further information and advice on asbestos is available from a number of sources. You can phone Medway's Housing Management Support Team on **01634 333601** or on the freephone number **0800 0730073**.

If you are concerned about your own health or the health of a member of your family and think that you or they have been exposed to asbestos, contact your GP or health board. The basic rule is, if in doubt, ask Medway Council is here to help.

# Asbestos in your home

Advice for Medway Council tenants



## Who to contact



**Customer First - Housing Management Support Team: 01634 333601 (Mon-Fri, 8am-8pm and Sat, 9am-1pm) or freephone 0800 0730073 or 01634 304400 (out-of-hours)**



**Housing Services, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR**



Email: [housing@medway.gov.uk](mailto:housing@medway.gov.uk)  
Email for repairs: [cfhousing.repairs@medway.gov.uk](mailto:cfhousing.repairs@medway.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.medway.gov.uk/housing](http://www.medway.gov.uk/housing)



Minicom: **01634 333111**

This information can be made available in other formats from **01634 333333**

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring **01634 335577**

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If your property is more than 15-years-old, it is possible that it contains materials made from asbestos. Asbestos fibres are strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. In the past, this led to their use in a wide range of building materials and products.

Properties built since the mid-1980s are unlikely to contain asbestos in the fabric of the building. Properties built after 1990 are extremely unlikely to contain asbestos anywhere in the building.

Asbestos cement has been widely used as a cladding material and can still be found in garages and sheds.

If you are a council tenant, Medway Council will inspect any areas that you may be concerned about and, if appropriate, employ a specialist contractor to remove the asbestos.



## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral made up of many small fibres.

## Why is asbestos potentially a problem?

All materials containing asbestos can be harmful if the fibres are inhaled and could potentially lead to long term health problems. In recent years, a number of alternative or substitute products have been developed.

## Day to day exposure to asbestos

The Health and Safety Executive confirms that there is a very low level of fibres in the air everywhere because asbestos has been used so extensively in the past. Exposure to this low level of fibres is unlikely to harm people's health.

However, high, short-term exposure to asbestos fibres can happen during do-it-yourself work. For this reason, try not to raise dust when working with materials that might contain asbestos and avoid sanding or drilling. If in doubt, do not touch it and seek advice.

**Remember, products containing asbestos can look similar to those not containing asbestos - if in doubt, seek advice.**

## Where will you find asbestos products or materials in your home?

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 following areas and appliances are where asbestos may be found:**

- **domestic equipment;**
- **asbestos lagging;**
- **warm air heating systems;**
- **insulating boards;**
- **sprayed asbestos;**
- **asbestos cement;**
- **textured plasters;**
- **materials for stippling ceilings, walls, etc.**

## How do you know if a material contains asbestos?

Identifying asbestos products can be difficult. If you think a product contains asbestos but are unsure, the manufacturer or supplier should be able to help you. Alternatively, phone the Housing Management Support Team on **01634 333601** or on the free phone number **0800 0730073**.