

Information for tenants – Asbestos in your Home

This leaflet is about Asbestos, and explains what it is, its effects on health, where it may be in the home and what South Tyneside Homes (STH) are doing to deal with it. Any home that was built before the year 2000 may contain some form of asbestos but as long as it is not damaged, flaking or loose it is unlikely to cause you problems. It is important to be aware that your home may contain asbestos, so you can avoid doing anything that could put you or your family at risk. If you have any concerns about Asbestos in your property, please contact STH on 03001236633

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a strong, fibrous rock that is formed by liquids passing through rocks over thousands of years. It was most commonly used in building materials between the 1950s and 1980s. Asbestos was often used to fireproof buildings but was also used as a general building material. Almost all buildings built or changed during this period are likely to contain some form of asbestos. Products that contain asbestos can often look the same as those that do not.

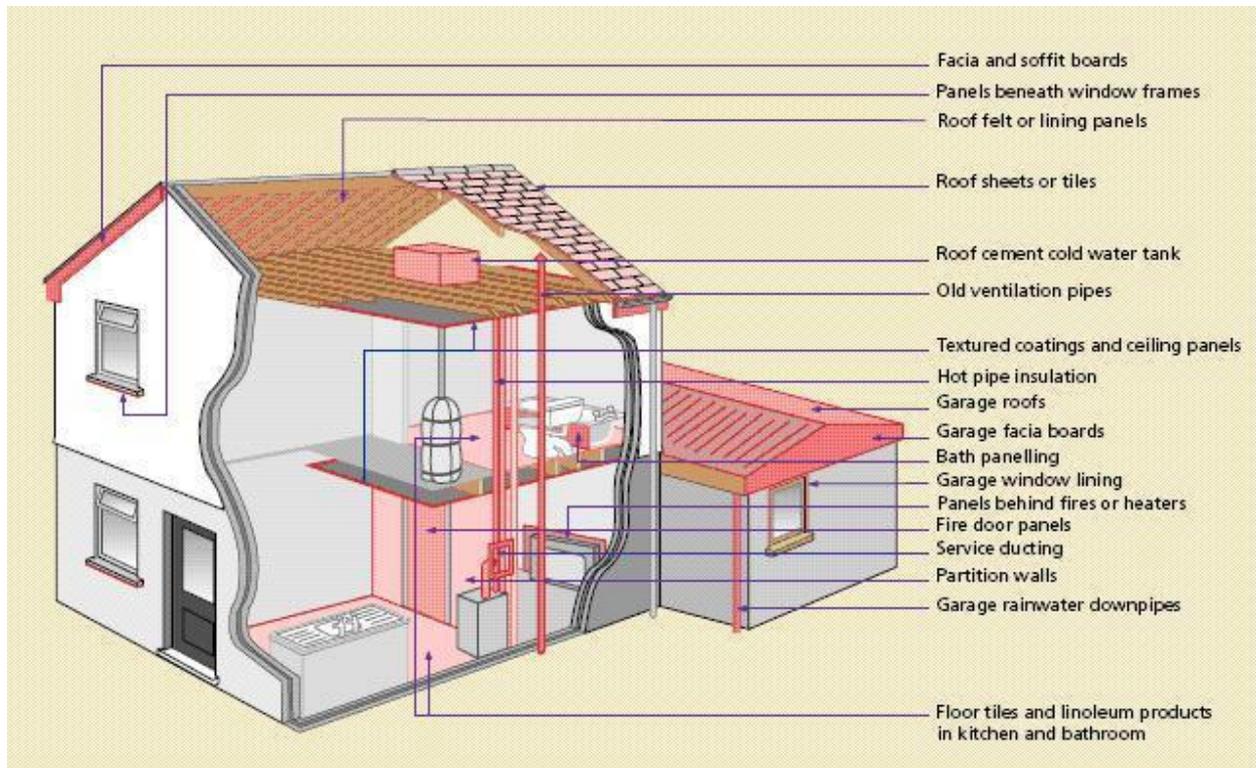
What is the likelihood of exposure to asbestos in the home?

There are very low levels of asbestos in the air all the time, exposure to this low level of asbestos fibres is unlikely to harm peoples' health. It is very unlikely that the levels of asbestos that may be found in your home will be harmful, but if you believe you have asbestos in your home, you should contact STH so we can survey and monitor the asbestos to reduce the risk even further.

Are you at risk?

Asbestos can only pose a risk to your health if the asbestos fibres become airborne. You will not be at risk if products containing asbestos are undisturbed or undamaged. In good condition asbestos is not a health hazard and if it is undamaged it should be left alone and monitored. If items do become damaged or deteriorate, then you and others around you may be at risk and you should contact STH. DIY activities such as drilling, sanding and sawing may disturb and possibly damage products containing asbestos. Before doing any DIY work you should first seek permission from STH who will be able to advise on the risk of asbestos in your home.

Where might I find asbestos in my home?



Not all homes contain Asbestos. Below is a list of places where asbestos can be found in properties, although these are not the only place it may be found.

- Exterior of buildings: Sheet roofing (often found in garages), some roof tiles, fascia boards, soffits, exterior cladding, guttering and drain pipes
- Boilers: Some interior workings of old boilers, boiler flues, old electric night storage radiators.
- Interior surfaces: Textured wall and ceiling coatings (for example Artex), Duct panels, infill panels (above doors), airing cupboard doors, panels behind radiators or heaters, vinyl based floor tiles, suspended ceiling panels, fire proofing to under stairs.
- Other areas: some bath panels, fireplace panels, bitumen pads to underside of kitchen sink, some water tanks, old pipe lagging, garage and shed roofs and some pipe boxing's.

What you should do if you suspect there is asbestos in your home?

If it is in good condition and cannot be easily disturbed it is best to leave it alone. However, if you are concerned about the condition of any suspect material within your home you should contact STH on 03001236633

STH has a dedicated Asbestos Team who can arrange for a surveyor to analyse the material and inform you if it is asbestos. We will also inspect the condition of the asbestos material, and if it is damaged or has started to deteriorate we will remove or seal it to stop the release of fibres

How we will manage asbestos in your home.

- Every property is surveyed for Asbestos and our register updated, once a property becomes empty. This is part of our ongoing programme to gather an accurate picture of the type and amount of asbestos in our properties.
- We have carried out Management surveys for the majority of our properties
- We hold details of “Asbestos Surveys” within the asbestos register.
- Properties will be inspected again from time to time depending on the types of asbestos found and the level of risk.
- Remember, if the asbestos is in good condition and is unlikely to be disturbed or damaged, it does not pose a risk to your health and we will leave it in place. We may seal materials containing asbestos to stop any fibre release and action any further works required to make the area safe.
- If we need to remove asbestos from your home we will keep you informed about the work and what you need to do to ensure the safety of your family.

Home Improvements

If you are planning home improvements please remember that your tenancy agreement requires you to get our permission before you carry out improvements, alterations or make additions to your property; this is to help control and monitor asbestos that may be present in your home. If you damage what you suspect to be asbestos, leave everything in place (Tools, groundsheets etc.), close the door leading to the room and contact us immediately. We will arrange to have a sample taken and tested to establish if it contains asbestos and take the appropriate action. If you require any further information then please contact STH on 03001236633

DIY Rules

- Do not drill, saw, scrub or sand anything you think may contain asbestos.
- Keep activities to a minimum in any areas where material may contain asbestos.
- Do not dust, sweep or vacuum debris that may contain asbestos.
- Take every precaution to avoid damaging asbestos materials or asbestos containing products.

If you are a Lease-Holder

Under the terms of your lease you are responsible for the maintenance of the internal areas of your flat, including any materials that may contain asbestos. As the leaseholder, you are responsible for ensuring that all materials, including those that may possibly contain asbestos, are kept in a safe and undamaged condition. STH is

responsible for the repair and maintenance of the structure, exterior and shared parts of blocks, such as roofs, communal areas, fascias and soffits. If you suspect that there is asbestos containing material in these areas that is damaged or in a poor condition then please contact STH on 03001236633

FAQ's

What should I do if I notice damage to an ACM?

Should you notice damage or accidentally disturb an Asbestos Containing Material, you should immediately report this to our contact centre on 0300 123 6633 so we can ensure your safety.

If there are asbestos containing materials in my home, why not remove it straight away?

Needlessly disturbing asbestos containing materials that are in good condition may produce dust and could increase health risks. When we survey homes to find out whether there are asbestos containing materials present, we also check the condition of the material. Materials in good condition do not cause health problems. If materials are in poor condition, we will consider removing them or sealing them. However, when we need to do building work on your home, disturbing asbestos may be unavoidable. If so, we would look at how we could safely remove the material.

I've been told that Artex contains asbestos. What is it and is it safe?

Artex is a textured coating that has been widely used in council properties on interior walls and ceilings. Older types of Artex coatings sometimes contain a small amount of asbestos. Artex is safe as long as it is left alone – it is stable and over the years has been coated with layers of paint.

Can I redecorate walls and ceilings coated with old Artex?

You can paint walls and ceilings coated with Artex, but do not sand or scrape the Artex surface. If you notice any damaged areas, please contact us for advice.

Do I have to move out if Asbestos is being removed?

Sometimes you have to move out to ensure your safety in line with current regulations however where you can safely remain within your property for the duration of the works you can. Often the works only take a couple of hours so can often be arranged at your convenience.

Can I nail gripper rods through asbestos containing floor tiles?

No you should not do this as the tiles are likely to fracture. Let us know if you plan to do this and we will arrange for the removal of the tiles around the edge of the room to facilitate this work.