

ASBESTOS

Everything you need to know

➤ What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the name given to a **naturally occurring** group of minerals that have been used in a range of building materials to make them more rigid and fire resistant. It has also been used in household products such as ironing boards and oven gloves.

Asbestos was used extensively as a building material in Great Britain from the 1950s through to the mid 1980s.

All types of asbestos were banned from use in Britain by 1999, but it still exists in at least 500,000 homes, as well as other buildings built before the year 2000.

➤ Who is exposed to asbestos?

Everybody has been exposed to a **very low level** of asbestos due to its previously widespread usage as a building material.

Workmen and those undertaking refurbishment and DIY are at the most risk as they could damage materials containing asbestos and release the fibres that are dangerous to health.

➤ Why is asbestos a problem?

Left alone, asbestos materials in good condition pose no health risk, but when materials containing asbestos become damaged they can release fibres into the air.

These fibres can be dangerous if inhaled and with high-level, long-term exposure can damage the lungs and cause serious diseases such as asbestosis and lung cancer.

➤ Where might I find asbestos?

Some of the most common areas in your home where you may find asbestos include:

- ➔ Eaves, gutters and rainwater fall pipes,
- ➔ Garage and shed roofs,
- ➔ Linings for walls, ceilings and doors,
- ➔ Textured coatings and artex.

This is not the full list. **If you are worried** about asbestos in your home, **let us know**.

➤ How can I tell if I find asbestos?

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.

Since 1976 British manufacturers have put safety warning labels on their products that contain asbestos.

➤ What should I do if I find asbestos?

Asbestos materials in good condition that cannot be easily damaged are **often best left where they are** as the process of removal can lead to higher levels of fibres in the air.

If you think you have asbestos in your home, and you are thinking of undertaking alterations that will disturb these materials, you must contact West Devon Homes as described below.

➤ Your responsibilities

Your tenancy agreement with West Devon Homes states that you **must get written permission** from West Devon Homes before carrying out improvements to your home beyond decoration such as laying carpets and wallpapering or painting walls.

➤ Our responsibilities

As part of our stock condition surveys we will inspect all homes every 5 years.

During this inspection, if materials containing asbestos are found to be damaged, or have deteriorated, we will carry out an asbestos survey and remove anything that poses a risk to your health. **All known asbestos materials are annually inspected** unless the condition of the material changes.

It's as easy as **1,2,3** to get involved!

Company Membership

**Tenant Panel &
Tenant and Resident Associations**

The Think Bank





You can choose one or more ways to help shape the Company, our services, and your neighbourhoods!



**Call West Devon Homes on
01822 813770
to receive copies of our
Involvement Leaflets**



**WHEREVER YOU SEE THIS SYMBOL,
YOU WILL BE ABLE TO REQUEST
INFORMATION IN THE FOLLOWING
FORMATS:**

-  **LANGUAGE TRANSLATION**
-  **BRILLE TRANSCRIPTION**
-  **AUDIO TAPE VERSION**
-  **FOR AN OFFICER TO READ AND EXPLAIN THE INFORMATION TO YOU**

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