



LEAFLET

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Asbestos in the home

A guide for residents

JRHT JOSEPH
ROWNTREE
HOUSING TRUST

This leaflet helps to answer concerns and questions residents have about asbestos in homes. It explains:

1. What asbestos is
2. Where it is found
3. Health problems associated with asbestos; and
4. How JRHT manages asbestos

1. What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a natural mineral found in rocks all over the world. It has been used commercially for about 150 years because it is strong, flexible and stable.

As asbestos fibres are strong and resistant to heat, they have been used in a range of building materials and products. Three types of asbestos were used in buildings: crocidolite (blue), amosite (brown) and chrysotile (white).

2. Where can asbestos be found in the home?

Asbestos was widely used from 1930 to the mid 1980s, but particularly from the 1960s onwards. Houses and flats built or refurbished during that period may contain asbestos, and it was still used in asbestos cement products until 1999.

Common products that contain asbestos are:

- asbestos cement panels, pipes and tanks;
- insulation boards used in walls and ceilings;
- artex and other textured coatings;

- roofing felts;
- vinyl floor tiles and backings to lino.

Until the mid-1980s asbestos was also used in many domestic products that had to be heat resistant, such as oven gloves, ironing boards, fire blankets, seals on oven doors and car brake pads.

Asbestos Cement is the most widely used asbestos material. It is found in many types of building as corrugated sheets for roofing and wall cladding, flat sheets and partition boards for lining to walls and ceilings. It has also been used in bath panels, soffit boards, fire surrounds, flue pipes, cold water tanks and as roof tiles and slates. Asbestos Cement was also commonly used as roofing and cladding for garages and sheds and also in guttering and drain pipes.

Asbestos Cement products are unlikely to release high levels of fibres because of the way they are made, unless subject to extreme abrasion. Damage from weathering may also release a small amount of fibres.

Insulating board has been used for fire protection, heat and sound insulation. It is particularly common in materials such as ducts, infill panels, ceiling tiles, wall linings and partitions. It is unlikely to be found in buildings built after 1982.

3. What are the health risks?

Materials containing asbestos

Asbestos containing materials release tiny fibres into the air when they are damaged or have deteriorated through age. These fibres, if breathed in, can penetrate deep into the lungs where they may become trapped. This may cause cancer and thickening of the lungs.

Examples are: mesothelioma and asbestosis (a crippling lung disease). These conditions often do not develop for many years – sometimes up to 50 years.

There are very low levels of fibre in the air everywhere because asbestos has been so widely used. Exposure to this low level of fibres is unlikely to harm people's health.

Blue and brown asbestos are the most dangerous of the three types.

When does it become a problem?

Even if there is asbestos in your home, it is usually not a problem. Asbestos **ONLY** becomes dangerous when it is damaged, or is disturbed during work on your home.

This is one of the reasons why it is important to contact JRHT prior to undertaking works at home.

The greatest risks arise when asbestos is damaged, or drilled, sawn, sanded or scrubbed. Certain DIY work can result in brief but high levels of exposure.

If you think a material might contain asbestos, do not disturb it – contact our Customer Services Team on freephone 0800 5870211 for advice. or email information@jrht.org.uk

Can you identify asbestos materials?

You cannot tell if a product contains asbestos simply by looking at it – a sample of the material has to be sent to a laboratory to be analysed.

4. How do we manage asbestos?

We manage asbestos within our housing stock by:

- surveying a representative sample of properties to locate and identify the type of asbestos present;
- informing residents and advising new residents at a change of tenancy if asbestos is believed to be present in their home;
- removing asbestos material (using specialist contractors) which has become damaged or is considered a risk to residents;
- ensuring any asbestos that remains is properly sealed or enclosed to prevent damage or release of fibres;
- regularly inspecting asbestos that remains within the buildings;
- providing additional information and advice to residents as required.

We will inform you if asbestos has been found in properties similar to your own.

Asbestos Dos and Don'ts:

- **DO** treat asbestos and materials that may contain asbestos with caution and respect;
- **DO** seek advice if you think there is a problem with asbestos in your home;
- **DO** regularly inspect material that you know contains asbestos to make sure it has not been damaged. Report any problems to Property Services on Freephone 0800 5870211;
- **DO** obtain approval before carrying out any improvements to your property;
- **DON'T** panic if you think you have asbestos in your home – it's usually only a problem if it is disturbed;
- **DON'T** drill, saw, sand or disturb asbestos materials in any way and be careful if carrying out DIY work – seek advice.

In most instances, where asbestos is not damaged, it is safer to leave the material in place and seal or enclose it rather than have it removed.

Who can I contact for further information?

This guide is to provide general advice only. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Customer Services Team on Freephone 0800 5870211.

Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust

Head Office

The Garth

White Rose Avenue
New Earswick
York
YO32 4TZ

Reception open Mon to Fri from 8.30 am to 5pm (Wed 10am to 5pm)

Tel: 0800 587 0211 (this line is diverted to the emergency call line outside the above hours)

Other offices where you can make enquiries or pay your rent/charges:-

Plaxton Court

Woodlands Drive
Scarborough
YO12 6QT

Reception open Mon - Fri from 9am to 5pm.

Weekends 10am to 2pm

Tel: 01723 340290 (this line is diverted to the emergency call line outside the above hours)

Hartfields Retirement village

Merlin Way, Bishop Cuthbert
Middle Warren
Hartlepool
TS26 0US

Reception open Mon - Fri from 8.15am to 12am and 6pm to midnight

Weekends 10am to 2pm and 6pm to midnight

Tel: 01429 855070 (during reception hours)

Tel: 07980 705713 (out of hours emergency line)

Email: information@jrht.org.uk

Visit our website: www.jrht.org.uk

JRHT is a registered housing association, managing around 2,500 homes, and is a registered provider of care services.

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