

Asbestos

In the home



South
Yorkshire
Housing
Association



syha.co.uk

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a natural mineral, which is mined from the ground. Asbestos was a very popular building material in homes for many years. It does not easily catch fire or get damaged by chemicals. It was used as insulation, and to strengthen a range of other building materials such as cement.

Could there be asbestos in my home?

Using asbestos was not banned in the UK in 1999, this means that your home may have some asbestos containing material in it. Building materials containing asbestos were widely used from 1930 to the mid-1980's, but particularly from the 1960's onwards. So, houses and flats built or refurbished during this time may contain asbestos materials.

Where you can find asbestos in the home

- Cupboards around boilers.
- Panels behind electrical equipment.
- Vinyl floor tiles.
- Textured coatings.
- Cold water storage tanks.
- Partition walls.
- Gutters and cement downpipes.
- Cement roofs.
- Roofing felt.
- Soffits and fascia boards.

Materials used by us since 2000 are free from asbestos. So if your home was built after 2000 you have no reason to be concerned.

What are the risks, will asbestos affect my health?

If there is asbestos in your home, this does not automatically mean there is a problem. Asbestos only becomes a problem if it is damaged or disturbed during building work or certain DIY tasks. This is because damaged asbestos releases fibres that if breathed in large amounts could harm your health. Asbestos is not a danger to your health if it is in good condition and is not disturbed.

Types of asbestos

CROCIDOLITE
(blue asbestos)

This is the most harmful type of asbestos and is only rarely found in domestic homes.

AMOSITE
(brown asbestos)

This is less harmful than blue but more harmful than white and can be found in domestic homes.

CHRYBOTILE
(white asbestos)

This is the most common and least harmful type found in domestic homes.

What can I do to reduce the risk?

- Don't repair or remove any material that you think may contain asbestos.
- Don't cut, break, saw, drill, sand or disturb anything that you think may contain asbestos.
- Protect yourself - Regardless of whether a material contains asbestos it is good practice to wear a disposable dust mask when undertaking DIY task that may create dust. Look for a mask that has a rating of FFP3. This rating will be written on the mask or the packaging.
- Don't take any risks. If you think a material in your home may contain asbestos, or you have damaged a material that you think could contain asbestos phone us on 0114 2900 200 and ask to speak to someone within the Property Services or Health & Safety Team. Alternatively email HealthandSafety@syha.co.uk and we will be able to check our register. If we haven't got a record, we can arrange to have the material inspected, have it analysed or carry out a risk assessment.

If you are in any doubt – do not disturb it and contact us on: 0114 2900 200

What does SYHA do to manage this potential risk within homes?

All SYHA's Contractors and Property Services Officer that come to your home are trained to identify materials that may contain asbestos. Whenever an asbestos containing material is discovered within a home, or we are told about its presence by a customer, we use a trained surveyor to assess this risk.

Asbestos was used so widely in the building trade for such a long time that identifying it is not easy and removing it from all homes isn't practical. Based on the advice of our surveyor we will decide whether to:

- Leave the material in place and make a record of where it is (if it is in good condition);
- seal the asbestos to stop it breaking down;
- cover the material with a safer material, such as timber or PVC; or
- remove it and replace it with a material that doesn't contain asbestos.

What if I am a leaseholder?

If you are a leaseholder, we are not responsible for any asbestos containing material in your home. But if you contact us we can provide you with advice and give you details of contractors licenced to deal with asbestos.

If your home is within a building and there are asbestos containing materials in any of the common areas, we are responsible for dealing with it.

If you have any concerns about asbestos in the home, please phone us on:

0114 2900 200 or email
HealthandSafety@syha.co.uk

More information on the risks of asbestos and where it can be found in the home can be found on the Health and Safety Executives (HSE) website: www.hse.gov.uk/building.htm