

Asbestos

Information and advice for contractors



PEABODY

Introduction

It is our policy, in line with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Health and Safety Executive's recommendations, to leave asbestos as it is. However, if the asbestos is in bad condition, is likely to cause frequent problems, or if a repair, improvement or alteration takes place on or near it, we may remove it.

This document gives you important information on how we manage asbestos which may be in your home. It also gives you information about the possibility of asbestos containing materials (ACMs) on our estates.

The important thing to remember is that as long as materials containing asbestos are left undisturbed, they are not a risk.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a strong fibrous material which can resist heat and chemicals. It was most commonly used in building materials between the 1950s and 1980s, because it:

- resisted chemicals;
- was fireproof; and
- was a good insulation material.

Asbestos was finally banned in the UK in 1999. However, a lot of our housing was built before this time and some properties contain asbestos materials. Products containing asbestos can look the same as those that do not, so you should always be careful.

What are the risks?

Asbestos is not a problem if it is not damaged and left alone. If it does become damaged or its condition worsens, you and others may be at risk. Asbestos can be dangerous if it is damaged or disturbed by drilling, sawing, sanding or scrubbing, as asbestos fibres are released into the air. If you breathe in asbestos, this can cause serious lung diseases.

You may sometimes briefly breathe in high levels of asbestos when you are doing activities such as DIY. If you think a material might contain asbestos, don't work on it and contact us for advice.

If asbestos is in good condition it is not dangerous to your health. However, if asbestos is damaged, we will deal with it in a safe and appropriate way. We follow all the rules and regulations on asbestos very strictly, and your health and safety the most important thing to us.

What Peabody are doing about asbestos

We have a long term commitment to manage materials containing asbestos within our properties. We are doing this by carrying out surveys to find material in shared areas and individual homes (when needed) that contain asbestos:

- Our Fire and Asbestos team has commissioned Type 2 surveys for 100% of our communal areas.
- Our Decent Homes team will commission Type 2 surveys for 20% of properties built before 1985 and 10% of properties built after 1985, and also carry out visual inspections on 100% of our properties.
- Our Sound, Improve and Digital TV teams will commission Type 2 or 3 asbestos surveys and abatement works where they are needed.
- Our Voids team will commission Type 2 or 3 asbestos surveys and abatement works where it is needed and will report any defects found in the ACMs.
- Our Commercial Initiatives team will commission Type 2 asbestos surveys and abatement works where it is needed and will report any defects found in the ACMs.
- Our Development team will commission Type 2 and Type 3 surveys as they are required.

In addition to this we are also:

- keeping a detailed asbestos database;
- assessing the risk from materials containing asbestos in all of our properties (where we know about this);
- making arrangements to manage the risk arising from materials containing asbestos;
- providing information, when asked, about the condition and location of materials containing asbestos to anyone who could be exposed to it;
- making sure that the appropriate action is taken by anyone who is likely to disturb materials containing asbestos, including staff, contractors and consultants;
- reducing the chance (as far as possible), of residents, their visitors, and contractors working on our properties being exposed to asbestos; and
- making sure all consultants and contractors sign and adhere to our Asbestos Management Plan.

Where could asbestos be found?

Outside the home

- Roof sheets and tiles
- Fascia boards
- Cladding
- Guttering and drainpipes
- Garage and shed roofs

Inside the home

- Textured wall and ceiling coatings (such as Artex)
- Duct panels (access to pipework)
- Infill panels (above, below or next to doorways and windows)
- Panels behind radiators and heaters
- Floor tiles
- Hanging ceiling panels
- Panels to the underneath of stairs
- Toilet cisterns

Other items

- Insulation to boilers and water heaters
- Boiler flue pipes
- Storage radiators
- Bath panels
- Fireplace panels
- Sink pads
- Water tanks
- Pipe lagging

These are not full lists, but include the places on our estates we usually find material that contains asbestos.

Advice for contractors - do's and don'ts

Do contact the Asbestos Team immediately if:

- any materials that you believe may contain asbestos have been damaged, disturbed or dumped;
- protective coatings or sealants are peeling or breaking off, or if special labels have been removed; and
- asbestos cement-based products (such as guttering or shed roofs) become damaged or badly weathered.

Also, do make sure that:

anything you think may contain asbestos stays in good condition; and before you approve any DIY work for a tenant you get advice from the Asbestos Team.

Make sure you don't:

- allow anyone to work on, or close to, materials containing asbestos, or allow any damage or removal of these materials;
- sand down, drill or scrape artex;
- drill, cut or sand down materials you think may contain asbestos; and
- break off pieces or break up large pieces of materials that you believe contain asbestos.

What do I need to do?

- Read our Asbestos Management Plan to make sure you know your duties and responsibilities in respect of asbestos management.
- Make sure your operatives and officers attend Asbestos Awareness training and keep evidence of this, because it needs to be forwarded to our Asbestos Team each year.
- Check the asbestos database for the location of anything on your managed estates that has been identified as, or thought to be, an ACM.
- If you think you might have other asbestos materials upon your estate, let our Asbestos Team know so they can look into it.

If you suspect that an asbestos containing material has been disturbed then you should take the following steps straight away:

- The surrounding area should be evacuated as soon as possible without causing alarm, then it should be sectioned off and preferably locked.
- Inform our Asbestos Team immediately. You should report all incidents, no matter how small, using our Health and Safety Incident Report Form, which must include details of any staff that could be affected. You must then send the form to our Health and Safety Team and our Asbestos Team.
- You should check the Asbestos Database to find out if there is any asbestos in the affected area.
- Complete a full assessment of the situation, asking an external asbestos specialist to check the extent and nature of damage, find out if there is any contamination and see if any further action should be taken.

Further Information

You can get more information, help and advice on asbestos by phoning us on 0800 022 4040 or by emailing asbestosinfo@peabody.org.uk.

Additional advice on asbestos in the home can be obtained from:

Health and Safety Executive

Tel: 0845 345 0055

Website: www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos

The Environment Agency

Tel: 08708 506 506

Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

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