



WHITEINCH & SCOTSTOUN
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Tenant Information

A guide to asbestos
materials in homes

Whiteinch & Scotsoun Housing Association has a duty to manage asbestos in the common areas of its properties. However this leaflet has been produced to address any questions and concerns you may have regarding 'asbestos containing materials' in your home.

It gives advice on what it is, where it can be found and should a problem occur, how to deal with it.

What is asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that has been used for many centuries. It has been mined extensively in a number of countries including South Africa, Canada and Australia. A large amount of asbestos material has been commercially imported into Britain over the last 150 years and used in a range of products to enhance their strength and durability.

Asbestos was used because it has many good properties including:

- Heat and fire resistance
- Strength and durability
- Non-corrosive - resistant to acids

As a result of having these qualities, asbestos fibres were added or mixed to a wide range of materials that have been used for fireproofing, insulation and soundproofing. Many asbestos materials have been used in the construction of buildings from the turn of the last century.

Due to concerns about the health risks associated with asbestos the importing and use of most forms of asbestos was banned in the early 1980's. Further action has since been taken to ban the import, sale and re-use of all types of asbestos material.

Properties built since the mid-1980's are very unlikely to contain any asbestos materials. However since asbestos materials were still in circulation after this date the HSE estimates that only properties built after 1999 can be considered to be asbestos free.

How could asbestos be a problem?

Due to its worldwide use and the mining operations to extract it, we are all exposed to very low levels of asbestos in the air we breathe every day, however it is unlikely to harm people's health.

It is also unlikely that levels of asbestos found in our buildings will be harmful, but if you have damaged, suspected asbestos materials in your home you should seek advice from the Repairs Section where you will be given guidance on the best course of action to take.

Where might I find asbestos in my home?

It is not always easy to spot materials that could contain asbestos on their appearance alone, especially if they have been decorated in some way. Experienced surveyors and health and safety specialists are best able to locate and identify them.

Typical locations of asbestos materials external to the dwelling:

- Eaves/soffits
- Rainwater goods (guttering, downpipes, soil pipes)
- Flue pipes and terminals
- Hip, ridge and roof tiles
- Corrugated cement sheeting- usually found on outbuildings and garage roofs

Typical locations of asbestos materials found inside properties are:

- Textured coating e.g. Artex type decorative coatings (prior to 1990)
- Fire stop panels (inside heater cupboards, drying cupboards and around boilers)
- Floor tiles and the adhesive bonding the tiles to floors
- WC cistern and seats
- Water storage tanks
- Flue pipes
- Electrical mains distribution cupboards (fuse box)
- Gasket and rope seals to gas and solid fuel fires
- Bath panels and boxing

Asbestos has also been used in other household products such as oven gloves and ironing boards. The use of asbestos within these products ceased in the mid-1980's.

Since 1985, all materials containing asbestos have to be clearly labelled, and since 1992, the use of asbestos in most products has been banned.

Advice and Guidance

Whiteinch and Scotstoun Housing Association seeks to maintain your property to a high standard and any materials containing asbestos are most likely to be in good condition and are unlikely to pose any significant risk to your health.

However, you could be potentially at risk when carrying out DIY or minor building repairs. Please read the guidance below and if you are at all concerned please contact the Repairs Section for advice.

What do I do if material containing asbestos is damaged?

If material containing asbestos is damaged:

Don't Worry

- Contact the Repairs Section and explain the problem.

Do Not

- Attempt to repair any damage or clean up any debris yourself.
- Sweep up or use a domestic vacuum cleaner, as this could lift asbestos fibres into the air.

What do I do if I want to Decorate?

Some older forms of decorative textured coatings e.g. Artex type decorative coatings are known to contain small amounts of asbestos. Please seek advice prior to these surfaces being disturbed.

Do Not

- Attempt to remove these types of coatings. Please seek guidance from the Repairs Section.

What do I do if I want to make alterations to my home?

You must not carry out structural alterations or improvements to your home unless Whiteinch & Scotstoun H.A. has given you permission. Please seek guidance and approval from the Repairs Section before carrying out work.

If you are concerned about any suspect material in your home, do consider that it may contain asbestos until proven otherwise.

Remember

- Asbestos materials which are in good condition and undamaged are not dangerous.



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