

- If we suspect that there is asbestos which may be disturbed when we go to do repairs.
- In common areas of blocks of flats.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF THE SURVEY SHOWS THAT THERE IS ASBESTOS?

After receiving a survey result the Council will take one of these three actions depending on the result:

- If the type of asbestos, location or condition has a high risk, we will have it removed safely by contractors with a special licence. They have to follow strict regulations to ensure asbestos is safely handled and disposed of in the correct way. This includes using specialised equipment and wearing protective clothes.
- With some asbestos, sealing or bonding will reduce or stop the release of fibres. In this case we will seal the asbestos and make sure that it is regularly monitored.
- If the asbestos is in a good condition, is sealed and not likely to be disturbed we will take no action but make sure that it is regularly monitored.

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, computer disc, audio tape, or suitable language, please contact :

The Highland Council  
Housing and Property Services  
Telephone: 01349 886630

Email:  
[housingandproperty@highland.gov.uk](mailto:housingandproperty@highland.gov.uk)

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# Asbestos in the Home

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## ASBESTOS

Asbestos is a natural mineral which was used in building materials for many years. The Highland Council, in common with other local authorities owns houses which may contain these materials. Asbestos is only a health hazard if it is damaged or disturbed and the fibres are released into the air and inhaled.

## WHY WAS IT USED?

Asbestos was widely used because of its strength, heat resistance, insulating properties and its resistance to chemicals. Its fibrous nature allowed it to be woven into fireproof materials and to be used to reinforce plastics and cement. It was commonly used in these types of materials up until the mid 1970's and its use in textured paints and other products continued to the mid 1980's.

## WHY IS IT NO LONGER USED?

Its widespread use in building materials stopped in the mid 1980's when research and information connected working with asbestos and exposure to asbestos dust with certain chest and lung diseases. Many of those suffering from asbestos related diseases worked in the building trades, particularly carpenters, plumbers, pipe fitters and boiler engineers. There is usually a long delay of between 15-60 years between first exposure to asbestos and the first symptoms of the disease.

## WHERE WAS ASBESTOS USED?

Asbestos is most commonly found in:

- Boards lining heating cupboards and heating cupboard doors.
- In the insulation of older models of storage heaters and warm air units.
- Heating and ventilation flues.
- Protective pads around behind or beneath cookers, boilers or electric consumer units.
- Boards forming enclosures to vertical pipe work.
- Textured coatings on ceilings – some types of artex.
- Some types of older vinyl floor tiles.
- Externally in parts of screen panels, fascia boards, soffits and as some rainwater gutters and pipes.
- In the material used on the roof and walls of some stores, sheds and garages.

## REMEMBER

- Most asbestos in the home poses no risk to the people who live there.
- Asbestos that is in good condition or

painted, covered by other materials or enclosed in ducts, cupboards etc. poses no risk if it is left alone.

- All asbestos is potentially hazardous but risk from it only occurs when it is damaged or disturbed.

## IS THERE ANYTHING YOU SHOULD DO?

In order to protect your health and that of your family:

- If you are doing work in your home be sure that you know what materials you are working on or disturbing.
- Avoid having to scrape, sand, drill, knock holes in or dismantle any material that contains asbestos.
- If you are doing work in your home and you think there may be asbestos in the area you are working on, contact your local Housing and Property Services Office or Service Point. They will arrange for someone to contact you and give advice.

## WHAT IS THE COUNCIL DOING?

The Highland Council does not have sufficient resources nor is it necessary to remove asbestos from all our houses but we are carrying out asbestos surveys:

- Before we do any major works in our houses e.g. installing new heating.