

Think twice about asbestos



What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that was used in many popular building products in Australia before eventually being banned in 2003.

Asbestos-containing materials are still common in homes built before 1990.

Why is asbestos a problem?

When asbestos materials are damaged, deteriorating or disturbed (e.g. by breaking, cutting, drilling, sanding or burning it), they release fibres into the air which can enter the body and cause life-threatening illness. These illnesses, like cancer, can take a long time to develop.

How do I know if a material contains asbestos?

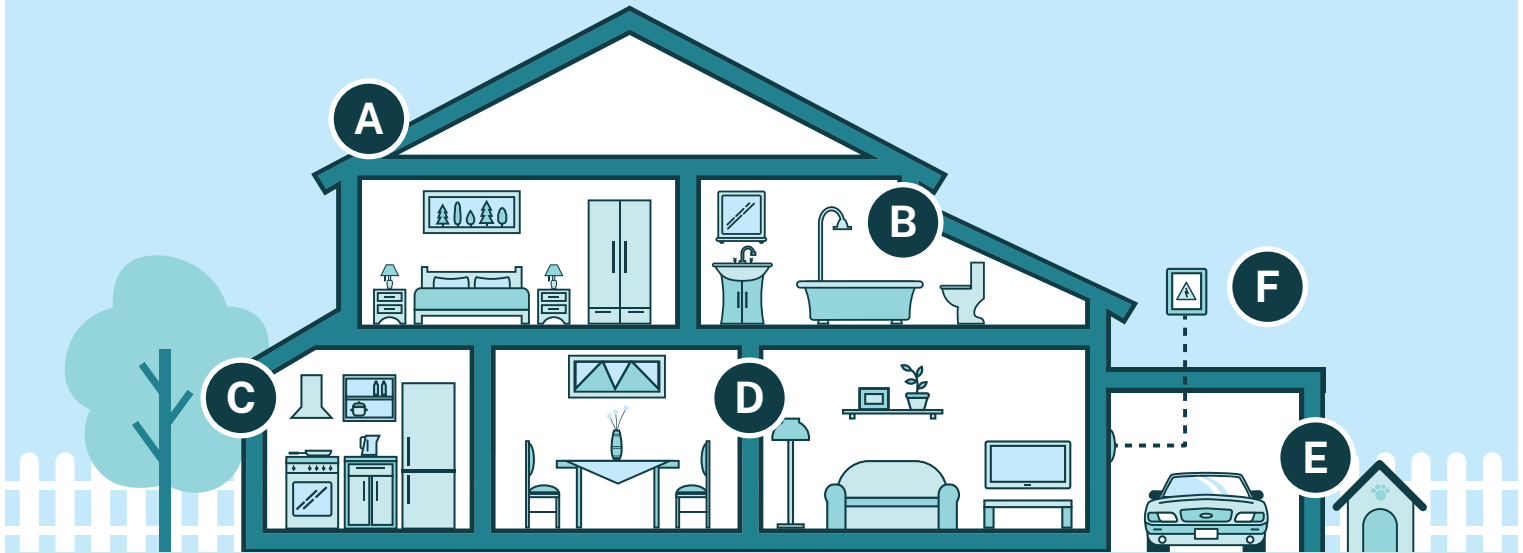
You can't tell if a material contains asbestos just by looking at it. Only scientific testing of a sample can confirm this. If you think a material might contain asbestos be safe and treat it like it is until you've had it confirmed by a professional.

How can I keep safe around asbestos materials?

1. Find out whether the property was built before 1990. Asbestos was used in thousands of building materials at that time.
2. Don't damage or disturb asbestos materials. This can release dangerous asbestos fibres into the air.
3. When working on commercial buildings built prior to December 2003, ask to see the asbestos register and asbestos management plan before doing any work.
4. Never use high pressure water, compressed air or a garden hose with a trigger attachment on asbestos containing products such as roofs, gutters, downpipes, eaves, fences and walls.
5. Contact a licensed asbestos professional for advice on where it's located, and on how to manage or remove it.

For more information, call SafeWork on 13 10 50

Where can it be found in the home?



A. Exterior

Roof sheeting, gutters, downpipes, ridge capping, imitation brick cladding and lining under eaves.

B. Bathroom, toilet and laundry

Wall and ceiling panels, vinyl floor tiles and backing for wall tiles.

C. Kitchen

Wall and ceiling panels, backing for splashbacks, vinyl floor tiles, backing of vinyl flooring and insulation in stoves.

D. Living areas

Wall and ceiling panels, carpet underlay and insulation in domestic heaters.

E. Backyard

Fences, garden sheds, garages, carports, outdoor toilets, dog kennels, buried and dumped waste materials.

F. Other areas

Backing of electrical switchboards, insulation in roof cavities, hot water pipe insulation, textured paint and plaster patching compounds.

Asbestos Awareness Training

You need to provide asbestos awareness training to any of your workers who may be exposed to asbestos on the job. This includes:

- roofers
- electricians; plumbers;
- carpenters
- painters and decorators
- demolition workers
- emergency services workers
- building and construction workers and
- bathroom and kitchen renovators

Staying safe on the job

Friable asbestos is asbestos in powder form, or asbestos that can be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to powder by hand pressure when dry. You need to hire a Class A asbestos professional to safely remove any amount of friable asbestos.

Non-friable asbestos is any material containing asbestos fibres that is reinforced with a bonding compound, such as asbestos cement sheeting. You can legally remove up to 10sqm of non-friable asbestos without a license, however SafeWork NSW recommends you hire a licensed asbestos professional to safely remove any amount of asbestos.

Ensure you're wearing full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including a fit tested mask, and that you're clean shaven for an effective seal. If you have facial hair you must wear a loose-fitting, powered air purifying respirator to ensure a seal that prevents inhalation of asbestos fibres.

If you choose to work with (for example drilling into) or remove less than 10sqm of non-friable asbestos yourself, follow the steps outlined in the Code of Practice – How to Safely Remove asbestos. You can also watch our tradie videos available in the asbestos section of the SafeWork NSW website under video resources (captions can be changed to your language by clicking on the settings icon on the bottom right of the YouTube video).