



# Asbestos Fact Sheet

## What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral fiber (a group of impure magnesium silicate minerals) that has been used commonly in a variety of building construction materials for insulation and as a fire-retardant. In the past, asbestos was used heavily in the construction, automobile and textile industries.

## Where is Asbestos found?

Today, asbestos is most commonly found in older homes, in pipe and furnace insulation materials, asbestos shingles, millboard, textured paints, other coating materials, and floor tiles.

Elevated concentrations of airborne asbestos can occur after asbestos-containing materials are disturbed by cutting, sanding or other remodeling activities. Improper attempts to remove these materials can release asbestos fibers into the air in homes, increasing asbestos levels and endangering people living in those homes.

## Three common types of Asbestos:

1. Chrysotile- fire proof but not acid proof. Can be made into asbestos cloth.
2. Amosite- heat and acid proof. Used for heat and pipe insulation.
3. Crocidolite- low resistance to heat but acid proof. Used for making cement and electric battery cases.

## Health risks of Asbestos:

The most dangerous asbestos fibers are too small to be visible. After they are inhaled, they can remain and accumulate in the lungs. There are no immediate symptoms, but long-term risk of chest and abdominal cancers and lung diseases:

- Asbestosis- irritation and scarring of the lungs due to inhaling asbestos dust.
- Mesothelioma- cancer of the chest and abdominal lining.
- Cancer- of both respiratory and digestive systems is common with asbestos workers.
- Asbestos Corns- warts caused when asbestos fibers penetrate the skin.

### **Factors that contribute to health risk of Asbestos:**

- The amount of asbestos dust within the area contamination.
- How susceptible each individual is to the dust particles.
- The size of the fiber particles.
- Whether or not there are other pollutants in the environment.

### **How can I stay safe from Asbestos?**

- Be aware of all hazards that surround your workplace.
- Always wear necessary protection equipment.
- Use appropriate clean-up procedures.
- Report all hazards.
- Constantly monitor your health.
- Keep track of asbestos levels in your environment.
- Keep accurate and updated medical records of all hazardous exposures to all individuals in the workplace.
- Learn about any other precautions that should be taken for your specific workplace environment.

### **For more information contact:**

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