

Tenants guide to asbestos



South Lakes Housing

0300 303 8540

www.southlakeshousing.co.uk



What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the name given to six natural minerals that have been used as insulation, reinforcement of building materials and fire protection.

It is not unusual to find asbestos in homes as it was used extensively in the building industry until 1999.

We understand that you may be worried about asbestos and its possible dangers. When properly managed, asbestos does not pose a risk to health.

Where might asbestos be in your home?

Asbestos may have been used in a number of parts of the property such as:

- slates;
- felt for roofs;
- decorative coatings to ceilings;
- bath panels;
- parts of boilers;
- gutters and downpipes;
- fire doors; and door frames;
- floor tiles;
- roof space insulation and tank supports.

Generally, asbestos is only a risk if you disturb or damage it and cause fibres to be released into the air.

If asbestos containing materials (ACMs) are in good condition and in a position where they are not going to be disturbed or damaged, then it is safer to leave them where they are and ensure that the risks are managed.

The greatest risk arises when ACMs are sawn, drilled, sanded or scrubbed. Asbestos fibres released during these activities cannot be seen with the naked eye. DIY work can result in brief but high levels of exposure to asbestos.

There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos, so you should not attempt to saw, drill or sand any walls, ceilings or floors in your home.

Carrying out Asbestos Surveys

We have a legal obligation to survey properties prior to any works, and we may be unable to carry out any repair or improvement work to your home until a survey has been completed.

Every property is tested for Asbestos when it becomes empty as part of our ongoing surveying programme to gather an accurate picture of the type and amount of asbestos in our properties. We will hold details of "Asbestos Surveys" within the asbestos register.

Properties will be inspected again from time to time depending on the types of asbestos found and the level of risk.

Remember, if the asbestos is in good condition and is unlikely to be disturbed or damaged, it does not pose a risk to your health and we will leave it in place. We may seal materials containing asbestos to stop any fibres escaping and action any further works required to make the area safe.

The reason for the survey is to identify if there is any asbestos in your home, and if it presents any risk and to advise you of the appropriate action which we need to take.

We would be grateful if you would co-operate when contacted if an inspection is required in your home. You should not give access to the surveyor unless they have shown you their identification.

What happens next?

You will be contacted by South Lakes Housing with the results of the survey if we need to take any remedial action. We are committed to fully implementing the independent consultant's recommendations. This means:

- Asbestos materials which are not damaged will have their condition monitored on a regular basis.
- Where possible, damaged materials will be repaired.

Asbestos will only be removed where there is no other option or the material is likely to be disturbed.

If we need to remove asbestos from your home we will keep you informed about the work and what you need to do to ensure the safety of your family.

What you should do if you suspect there is asbestos in your home?

If it is in good condition and cannot be easily disturbed it is best to leave it alone. However, if you are concerned about any material within your home you should contact South Lakes Housing on 0300 303 8540.

South Lakes Housing has a dedicated Asbestos Contractor who can arrange for a team to analyse the material and inform you if it is asbestos. We will also inspect the condition of the asbestos material, and if it is damaged or has started to deteriorate we will remove or seal it to stop fibres escaping.

What if I want to carry out works to my home?

If you are planning home improvements please remember that you will need to get permission from South Lakes Housing for anything other than decoration. If you think you have asbestos in your home do not do anything that could release fibres into the air. This means do not insert drawing pins, screws or nails or apply adhesive tape.

If you think you may have asbestos in your home and wish to carry out an improvement to this area, please always talk to us first. We can check our records and tell you if any asbestos is present in your home or arrange for our specialist contractors to carry out an asbestos survey.

Frequently Asked Questions

If there are asbestos containing materials in my home, why not remove it straight away?

Needlessly disturbing asbestos containing materials that are in good condition may produce dust and could increase health risks.

When we survey homes to find out whether there are asbestos containing materials present, we also check the condition of the material.

Materials in good condition do not cause health problems. If materials are in poor condition, we will consider removing them or sealing them. However, when we need to do building work on your home, disturbing asbestos may be unavoidable. If so, we would look at how we could safely remove the material.

I think I may have disturbed or damaged some asbestos containing materials in my home – what should I do?

Contact Customer Services on 0300 303 8540 and we will arrange to have the material inspected and assessed. We will then decide what action is required to make it safe.

I've been told that Artex contains asbestos. What is it and is it safe?

Artex is a textured coating that has been widely used in council properties on interior walls and ceilings. Older types of Artex coatings sometimes contain a small amount of asbestos. Artex is safe as long as it is left alone – it is very hard and over the years has been coated with layers of paint.

Can I redecorate walls and ceilings coated with old Artex?

You can paint walls and ceilings coated with Artex, but do not sand or scrape the Artex surface. If you notice any damaged areas, please contact us for advice.

I have noticed some broken pieces of vinyl floor tiles that I think may contain asbestos. Is my health at risk?

No, even broken pieces of tile don't produce much dust, so there should be little health risk. But contact us and we will have them removed safely.

The disposal of asbestos is a matter for specialists.

If you have any concerns about asbestos in your home or need further advice please contact us on 0300 303 8540 or email: customerservices@southlakeshousing.co.uk