

ASBESTOS IN NEW YORK CITY HOMES



JOINTLY PUBLISHED BY
 Council on the Environment of New York City
 New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health
 New York City Department of Environmental Protection
 United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration
 The Real Estate Board of New York, Inc.
 White Lung Association

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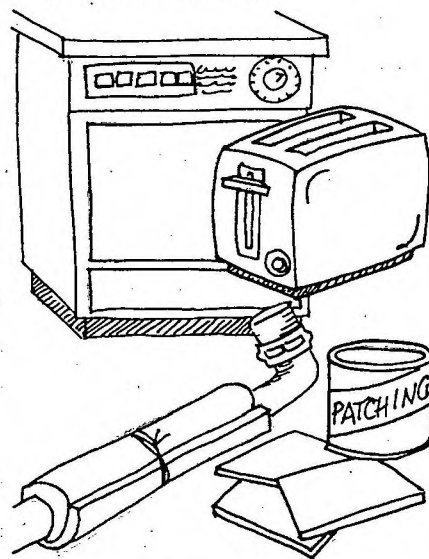
Asbestos, once thought to be a wonder material for use in insulation, fireproofing and textiles, is now known to be associated, if inhaled or ingested, with cancer and other serious illnesses. Although airborne asbestos can be hazardous, its danger is greatly diminished by careful handling and strict monitoring of all asbestos-related work.

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

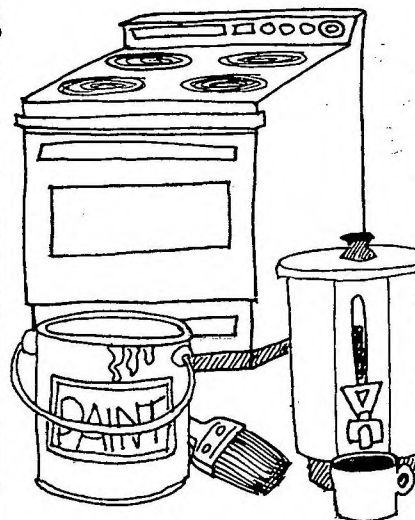
The name "asbestos" refers to a family of strong and flexible mineral fibers that are relatively indestructible, heat resistant and chemically stable. Over the past six decades these fibers have been used in over 3,000 different products manufactured in the United States. Currently, thousands of tons of asbestos per year are processed as floor and ceiling tiles, brake linings, cement shingles, and many other familiar products. More than half of all high-rise buildings built in the United States prior to 1979, when the United States Environmental Protection Agency banned most uses of asbestos in construction, contain some form of asbestos. Buildings constructed after 1979 may also contain asbestos-containing materials which were not banned by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

WHERE MIGHT YOU FIND ASBESTOS IN YOUR HOME?

- ☐ In some toasters, dishwashers, ovens and other appliances;
- ☒ Under some radiator covers;
- ☒ In insulation for some hot water pipes and furnaces;



- ☒ In some roofing and siding shingles;
- ☒ In some paints and patching compounds manufactured before 1978;
- ☐ In some floor and ceiling tiles;
- ☐ Inside some walls as insulation and as a plaster binding agent.



WHAT ARE THE HEALTH HAZARDS?

Asbestos increases the risk of contracting four serious diseases that affect the lungs and digestive tract:

- ☐ Lung cancer
- ☐ Mesothelioma, a cancer of the lining of the lung or abdomen
- ☐ Gastro-intestinal cancer
- ☐ Asbestosis, which usually results from chronic occupational exposure to airborne asbestos fibers and is not a disease found in the general population.

Except for asbestosis, these illnesses usually develop, if at all, 20 or more years after the initial exposure.

There is no known safe level of exposure to asbestos. The more fibers a person inhales or ingests, the greater the health risk.

If you smoke and are exposed to asbestos, your chance of contracting these diseases is 50-90% higher than that of someone who does not smoke and is exposed.

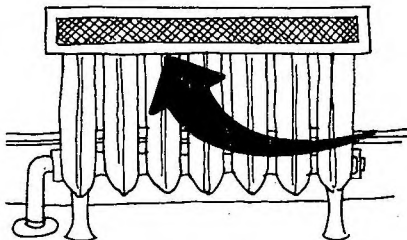
IN WHAT FORM IS ASBESTOS DANGEROUS?

Asbestos is dangerous when the fibers become airborne. If asbestos fibers are not firmly bonded or compacted within another material, these fibers may crumble into a dust comprised of microscopic particles. Asbestos in this form is easily released into the air where it can be inhaled, swallowed or become attached to clothing.

Experts consider tightly bonded asbestos to be relatively safe unless it is disturbed.

RECOGNIZING ASBESTOS

It's difficult to recognize asbestos since it is in many items and forms. Your boiler may be coated with a white plaster-like substance containing asbestos. Your hot water pipes may be wrapped with asbestos-containing insulation that sometimes looks like corrugated cardboard. On the inside of radiator covers, you may find an asbestos-containing liner which resembles plaster board. Vinyl floor tiling that contains asbestos looks like vinyl flooring that doesn't contain asbestos.



Asbestos insulation may be in the walls and around pipes behind the walls. Therefore, prior to embarking on plumbing repairs and other demolition or repair work behind your walls, consult with a NYC certified asbestos investigator to determine if asbestos may be present.

Some products containing asbestos are still being manufactured. If you are concerned about a product ask the manufacturer for the Product Safety Data Sheet or Material Safety Data Sheet.

CALL THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION AT 1-800-638-CPSC FOR THEIR BOOKLET "ASBESTOS IN THE HOME."

IF YOU THINK THERE IS ASBESTOS IN YOUR HOME

- Do not sand, drill, grind, cut or otherwise disturb any material you think may contain asbestos. Even small spot repairs require great care and special equipment. Asbestos should be handled by a trained individual.
- Do not dust, sweep or vacuum particles suspected of containing asbestos. Asbestos fibers can break down into smaller and finer fibers. The fibers can become so small that they cannot be seen and can pass through normal vacuum cleaner filters and get back into the air.
- Hire a New York City Certified Asbestos Investigator to survey your home for asbestos and recommend a course of action.
- If you are sure the asbestos in your home is in good condition, don't disturb it; check its condition periodically.
- Consult with a New York State Certified Asbestos Investigator BEFORE embarking on furnace and boiler replacement, or any demolition and/or renovation to determine if asbestos is present and may be disturbed.
- You can hire a contractor licensed by the New York State Department of Labor who employs New York State and/or City Certified Asbestos Abatement Handlers and Supervisors to remove or encapsulate the asbestos. It is wise to obtain at least two estimates. Ask to see the New York State and/or City certificate with photo identification of each worker and supervisor.
- If you want to take samples yourself, call the White Lung Association, 212-619-2270, for procedures for taking bulk samples to determine if a material contains asbestos. Make sure the laboratory you choose to analyze the samples is accredited with the American Industrial Hygiene Association and has performed well in the EPA's Bulk Asbestos Accreditation. Be sure to follow all procedures recommended to protect yourself against exposure when taking samples.
- It is not recommended, but if you want to do your own asbestos repair or removal work, take a course in asbestos removal. The White Lung Association offers courses for homeowners; the New York State Department of Health and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection have lists of approved courses for asbestos handlers.
- Consult with the manufacturers to ascertain if your appliances contain asbestos. Have a qualified repair technician repair any appliance you feel may contain asbestos.



BEFORE YOU HIRE AN ASBESTOS CONTRACTOR

- Ascertain that the firm is licensed by New York State, that the workers are certified by New York State and/or New York City and that they have photo identification.
- Be aware that there are several ways to remedy an asbestos problem: removal of the material, encapsulation of it and enclosure.
- Make sure that your contract states that the work will be performed in accordance with all federal, state and local laws.

DOES THE LAW PROTECT YOU FROM ASBESTOS?

Numerous laws regulating most asbestos-related work have been passed. The following are some highlights:

Federal

- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) mandates limits on exposure in the work place of not more than 0.2 fiber per cubic centimeter of air (f/cc) as an 8-hour time-weighted average airborne concentration.
- Construction activities (demolition or renovation) which will disturb asbestos must be reported to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and be conducted according to EPA and OSHA regulations and rules.
- Regulations recently proposed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would phase out most uses of asbestos over the next ten years. The Consumer Product Safety Commission is proposing labeling requirements.

New York State/City

Applicants for building permits for alterations or demolition which will disturb asbestos must file New York City Department of Environmental Protection report form ACP-7 with the New York City Department of Buildings. This asbestos-related filing is required before work begins; it outlines the type and duration of the activity, the amount of asbestos-containing material involved and the planned disposal date.

If a building permit is required and there is no asbestos present, New York City Department of Environmental Protection Report Form ACP-5 must be filed with the permit application stating that the work is not an asbestos project. The form must be signed by a New York City Certified Asbestos Investigator.

When asbestos is to be removed, encapsulated, or enclosed, and no additional work requiring a building permit is to be performed, Report Form ACP-7 must be filed directly with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection one week before work begins.

If less than 25 linear feet or less than 10 square feet of friable asbestos-containing material is to be disturbed, notification is not required.

- **Report Forms ACP-7 and ACP-5** may be obtained from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection at 212-323-8652 or from the borough offices of the Buildings Department.
- **A New York State and/or City asbestos handling certificate** is required for each person working on or supervising any construction, demolition or renovation project disturbing asbestos. To obtain a certificate, an individual must have completed and passed a training program approved by the New York State Department of Health or the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.
- **Workers and supervisors** are issued photo identification cards by the New York State Department of Labor.
- **Construction work** disturbing asbestos must follow special safety procedures prescribed by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and the New York State Department of Labor to protect the public and workers from contamination.
- **Local Law 70 of 1985** of the City of New York regulates the transport, storage and disposal of asbestos waste under 500 lbs.
- **Homeowners** are advised to get a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation licensed hauler to transport and dispose of asbestos wastes over 500 lbs. or 50 cubic yards. The transportation, storage and disposal of asbestos waste by a licensed carter is regulated by the Department of Sanitation in conjunction with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

READING

- **Asbestos in the Home.** 12 pp. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207. 1-800-638-CPSC.
- **New York City Confronts Asbestos.** Department of Environmental Protection, 2454 Municipal Building, New York, NY 10007 1-212-323-8655

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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| ■ Courses on Asbestos Removal | } White Lung Assn.
212-619-2270 |
| ■ Asbestos Testing Laboratories | |
| ■ How to Take a Sample | |
| ■ Disposal | New York City Department of Sanitation, Waste Disposal 212-566-5326 |
| ■ Laws, City | New York City Department of Environmental Protection 212-323-8655 8641 |
| ■ Laws, State | NYS Dept. of Labor 718-797-7659 |
| ■ Laws, Federal | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 212-264-6770 |
| ■ NY Certified Asbestos Investigators | New York City Department of Environmental Protection 212-323-8647 |
| ■ Asbestos in your workplace | New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health 212-627-3900 |

General:

- Consumer Product Safety Commission 1-800-638-CPSC
- National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, 1-800-35-NIOSH, 1-800-356-4674
- NYC Department of Environmental Protection 212-323-8655
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 202-554-1404