

**A Tenant’s Guide to Asbestos**

**What is asbestos?**

Asbestos is a mineral which has been used in building materials for many years worldwide. It is a good insulator and has been used extensively to protect building structures from fire and heat.

Asbestos is always mixed with other materials and can be difficult to identify. However, it is a risk to people’s health only if it is damaged or disturbed and the fibres are released into the air. As a result, it is important that you do not damage any material that contains asbestos by breaking, sawing, drilling and so on.

**What was asbestos used for?**

Because of its many uses, asbestos was widely used in building houses throughout Scotland up until the year 2000. It was used in many materials and is most commonly found in the following:

* Cold-water tanks in lofts;
* Textured coatings, such as Artex. Some textured coatings contain asbestos fibres. They are normally well bonded and the fibres are not easily released into the air. In recent years only non-asbestos grades of textured coating have been used, but both versions look identical. If your house has the textured coating that contains asbestos, it can be removed only by licensed contractors.
* Boards enclosing pipework;
* Boards lining heating cupboards and their doors;
* Insulation in storage heaters and warm-air heating units;
* Flues associated with heating;
* ventilation and systems for getting rid of rubbish;
* Some types of ceiling and vinyl floor tiles;
* Parts of outside window screen panels, pipes and so on.

**What are the risks from asbestos?**

Most asbestos in the home does not generally put people at risk:

* Asbestos that is painted, covered by other materials or enclosed in ducts is not a risk if it is left alone;
* All asbestos can be harmful, but it puts people at risk when it is damaged or disturbed;
* As long as asbestos is mixed and bound with other materials in good condition, sealed and not likely to be damaged or worked on, it does not give off harmful fibres and so is perfectly safe.

**What we are doing?**

We have an asbestos policy in place.

We will survey a percentage of our properties each year to check for asbestos. The survey is part of the ongoing asbestos management programme which will help build up a picture of our properties. This means that any future repairs and improvements can deal with asbestos, and so reduce the risk to tenants and other people who use our buildings. We will inform contractors where we know a property has asbestos so that they can take the necessary precautions if they are working close to it.

**What you should do if you think you have asbestos in your home**

You should not try to remove any material that you think may be asbestos from your home.

There is no danger to your health and safety as long as you do not disturb any suspect material. It is vital therefore that you do not saw, drill, sand or break any material suspected of containing asbestos.

Our officers will visit your home to investigate and give advice on necessary action.

**If you suspect that you have found asbestos, you should report this immediately to us on 0141 952 2447.**