



Asbestos

Asbestos is a natural material which is used to make a multitude of products.

Due to its almost indestructible nature, breathing-in asbestos fibres (many are microscopic) can lead to serious, often fatal, diseases.

It may be many years before any health effects are displayed which, unfortunately in most cases, is too late to treat effectively.

Working on or near asbestos or Asbestos Containing Materials (sometimes abbreviated as ACM) obviously increases your chances of getting an asbestos-related disease.

It is vital that you do all you can to protect yourself and others if you know (or suspect) that you are being exposed to asbestos.

Where can asbestos most likely be found?

- In and around buildings built before the year 2000.
- Roofing-sheets, cladding, gutters and downpipes.
- Insulation and sprayed coatings (pipework, boilers, roof and underfloor spaces).
- Textured coatings and paints (ceilings, walls, fixtures and fittings).
- Floor and ceiling tiles.
- Fire protection (insulating board, doors, partitions).

Where are you at risk?

- When asbestos or ACM is disturbed/broken and fibres are released into the air.
- When asbestos fibres land and stick in your hair or on your clothes. These fibres can then be easily transferred into your vehicles and into your homes exposing others.

How do you minimise the risk?

- Before starting work on a new or unfamiliar site, take steps to clarify if asbestos or ACM is (or is likely to be) present – Speak to your manager or supervisor, Asbestos Survey Reports and Asbestos Management Plans may also be available.
- Learn, through training, how to recognise and work safely with asbestos.
- Keep in-mind the safety and protection of others (colleagues, other workers and members of the public) make sure your actions protect everyone who may be affected by what you do.
- **NEVER** take risks or shortcuts when working with or near asbestos, stick to your training.
- If you're unsure, stop work and ask for advice and guidance.

Remember, asbestos-related diseases are the single biggest cause of work-related deaths in the UK; this looks likely to continue for some time to come – Do all you can not to become just another statistic.