

Asbestos

Asbestos was commonly used in buildings up until the 1980s. It does not pose a risk to health if it is undamaged or in a position where it cannot be easily disturbed.

Our policy is in line with current safety requirements and is to leave asbestos in position unless:

- It is in an unsatisfactory condition
- Is likely to be subject to frequent disturbances
- It needs to be removed as part of a repair, alteration or improvement.

This leaflet tells you how we deal with asbestos.

What we are doing about asbestos

West Kent has a long term commitment to removing asbestos from all its properties. This is not necessary in the short term. There is only a risk to health if asbestos fibres are breathed in and asbestos is usually found in locations where it is extremely unlikely that this will happen.

We are surveying all our properties so that we are aware of the presence, the type and the condition of any asbestos there is. We can then decide what we will do about it. We will tell you if there is any asbestos in your home and what measures you should take to avoid disturbing or damaging it.

Questions you may have about asbestos

Where is asbestos found in buildings?

Asbestos is most usually found in these locations:

- Insulation of pipes and boilers
- Firebreak walls in lofts, fire protection in ducts, firebreaks, panels, partitions, soffit boards, ceiling panels and around steel work
- Insulation boards to partitions and ducts
- Some ceiling and floor tiles
- Paper products used for insulation of electrical equipment
- Asbestos cement based products – such as flat or corrugated sheets used as roofing and wall cladding, gutters, rainwater pipes and water tanks
- Certain textured coatings, for example: Artex.

What do I do if the materials containing asbestos in my home are damaged?

Tell us straight away – we'll inspect it and let you know what we plan to do.

You say I have asbestos in my house but have not removed it – why?

It's dependant on the level of risk, asbestos may be left in place if it is not a danger and unlikely to be disturbed or it may be sealed with paint or plastic film.

You have found asbestos in my neighbour's house, when will you survey mine?

If your neighbour's home is of a similar type and age we can assume that the results would be similar and therefore do not need to bother you to do a survey.

Why have you removed asbestos from empty properties but not from mine?

When a property is empty, this is the ideal opportunity to remove it with minimal risk and inconvenience.

Can I decorate and carry out DIY?

Yes – but you must take note of the advice relating to any asbestos which may be present in your home. Asbestos should not be disturbed or rubbed down (See Do's and Don'ts below). If your improvements are likely to increase the asbestos risk then you have to comply with the asbestos regulations and use specialist licensed contractors.

Remember, you need our written permission if you want to improve your home.

Dos and Don'ts

Do contact us immediately in any of the following circumstances

- If materials you believe may contain asbestos have been damaged or disturbed.
- If protective coatings or sealants are peeling or breaking off or special warning labels have been removed.
- If the hard durable surface of asbestos cement based products is broken, damaged, badly weathered or eroded.

Don't

- Work, damage or remove materials containing asbestos. The law requires licensed contractors to be used for all work on asbestos.
- Sand down or scrape off dry Artex.
- Drill, cut or sand materials you may think contain asbestos. These tools create dust.
- Break off pieces or break up large pieces of materials that you believe contain asbestos.
- Jet wash or clean down asbestos cement products. For example shed/garage roofs.

Asbestos Management Policy Statement

West Kent recognises the risk associated with asbestos and acknowledges our responsibility to reduce the exposure to asbestos of our employees, tenants, contractors and other people affected by our activities so far as is reasonably practicable.

To achieve this, we have implemented a programme of actions identifying, recording and managing asbestos (including safe working arrangements) in properties we control, undertaking this in a planned and rational manner based on risk assessment. However, we affirm that materials containing asbestos form an integral and important part of many premises and if well maintained these do not present any threat to health.

If you have any questions or concerns about asbestos in your home which are not dealt with in this leaflet, you can contact us on 0800 1691122