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Danger Of Asbestos

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What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral substance that can split into many tiny fibres. When present in the air, these fibres can be inhaled into the lungs where they may lodge. If sufficient fibres are inhaled they can lead to diseases such as lung scarring, lung cancer and mesothelioma (cancer outside of the lungs).

The exposures encountered by members of the general public outdoors or in their homes are very low and unlikely to present any risk. Nevertheless, it is wise to take precautions if you are doing DIY on any substance you suspect may contain asbestos as illness is often associated with large exposures.

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Old Asbestos Products

Older asbestos products are not necessarily more dangerous. In some cases (for example, asbestos cement) the product containing fibres may deteriorate with age, making fibre release more probable.

Asbestos fibres are very durable and their condition will not normally change over time. There is no evidence that the overall risk associated with these fibres will increase, but exposure potential may be higher with materials in poor condition due to age.

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Asbestos Image Gallery

A gallery of photographs is available on the HSE website. This give examples of where asbestos may be found and what it looks like.

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Asbestos

Asbestos in Commercial Premises

Asbestos in Residential Premises

Hazardous Waste

Health and Safety

Downloads

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