



Northumberland County Council

Asbestos information for householders

Please read the following information in conjunction with Northumberland County Council's [hazardous household waste collection service webpage](#).

What is asbestos?

- Asbestos is made of minerals which comprise of microscopic fibres.
- Before its dangers were known, it was used in buildings for insulation, flooring, and roofing. It was also sprayed on ceilings and walls.
- It is now banned in the UK.
- Buildings constructed before the year 2000 may still have asbestos in them.
- If any asbestos-containing materials inside these buildings remain intact, they pose very little risk. It is only when these materials are damaged or disturbed that the tiny fibres can be breathed into your lungs.

Where is it found?

Asbestos can be found in any industrial or residential building constructed or refurbished before the year 2000. Please see below for where it is more commonly found:

- ceiling tiles
- insulation, gaskets and sealants on pipes and pipe joints
- boilers
- sprayed coatings
- asbestos cement sheeting
- boarding around windows
- radiators
- fireplaces
- columns and pillars
- soffit boards
- textured coatings (Artex)
- inside fire doors
- fuse boxes and electrical switchgear
- rainwater downpipes and guttering
- night storage heaters (older models)

[Please click here for more information about where asbestos may be found around the home.](#)

Asbestos removal

If you are a building, maintenance, or allied trade, [please click here to see more information about carrying out work involving asbestos.](#)

The DIY removal of any type of asbestos is not advisable. It is recommended that you use a [licensed asbestos removal contractor](#) who will safely dispose of any asbestos from your home.

PLEASE NOTE: Do not attempt to remove materials such as loose fibre asbestos, lagging, spray coatings, areas of insulation board, or boilers containing asbestos, as these materials can only be safely removed by a licensed contractor.

Any removal work that you choose to do is at your own risk, and you must take precautions to protect yourself and others.

If you are carrying out any removal work for cement-bound asbestos yourself, we can offer the following guidance as information only:

1. Prepare the area that you are working in:

- Remove any unnecessary items
- Cover the floor and any surfaces with disposable polythene sheeting
- Ensure that children and pets are away from the area that you are working in

2. Outside work:

- Do the work on a non-windy day.
- **Let People Know!**
- Move children's play equipment or garden furniture away from the work area.
- Close windows and doors, and seal vents and under doors to stop dust getting into the house - **ask neighbours to do the same.**

3. Inside work:

- Close doors and use tape and plastic sheets to seal the work area off from other areas inside the house.
- Lay thick plastic sheeting under the work area to prevent any dust from contaminating the flooring. Be sure to tape around the edges.
- Cover vents, air conditioning, and central heating ducts.

- Remove any soft furnishings, rugs, and curtains from the work area. If they can't be moved, seal them in plastic.
- Move any children's toys or play equipment away from the work area.

4. Removal work:

- Wear appropriate PPE:
 - disposable overalls with a hood
 - an FFP3 dust mask
 - non-slip gloves
 - shoe covers
 - goggles
- Keep the area damp to suppress potentially harmful fibres. Use a light spray and **avoid soaking the area** as it makes clean-up harder.
- Don't waterblast or scrub the area.
- Remove asbestos without breaking it up, this includes the careful removal of bolts.
- **Do not use any power tools.**
- Avoid drilling or cutting into any asbestos products.
- Don't drill holes through eaves, flues, or vents, as these may also be asbestos products.
- **Never cut into an asbestos cement sheet.** Remove the entire sheet and replace it with a non-asbestos product. Lower the sheets to the ground carefully to minimise breakage.
- Don't eat, drink, or smoke in the work area.

5. Wrapping:

- Asbestos sheets must be double-wrapped in thick plastic sheeting and taped with duct tape.
- Damp-proof membrane (DPM) is the recommended plastic sheeting for a material such as asbestos.
- Don't break asbestos materials into pieces.
- If there happens to be any small or broken pieces, please place these in a strong, heavy-duty bag such as fertiliser bags. It will be best to double-bag any asbestos materials too.
- Please ensure that all bagged and wrapped asbestos materials are not too heavy for one person to lift (max. 25kg parcels).

6. Clean-up:

- **Avoid sweeping.**
- Never use a vacuum cleaner as this will spread dust around the house, as well as contaminating your Hoover.

- Old, damp rags can be used to clean up the area afterwards, but must be double-bagged and disposed of properly.
- On completion of the work, carefully roll up any polythene sheeting and dispose of as asbestos waste.
- Any protective overalls, masks, goggles, shoe covers, and gloves should be bagged and presented for collection. **Only remove face mask and goggles after removing and bagging up overalls and shoe covers.**
- Shower straight after the job is complete.

7. Collection services for asbestos

- It may be possible for Northumberland County Council to dispose of some of your hazardous waste, please book on the council website.
- If your property has already had the maximum quota of asbestos collected on the council's free collection service, you will need to arrange for private collection, please see below for where to get professional advice:

[Please click here for the Asbestos Removal Contractors Association \(ARCA\).](#)

[Please click here for Vega Environmental Consultants Ltd. \(Vega EC\).](#)