

# DIY and Asbestos

## Know the facts before you start that DIY project

This factsheet will help you make the right decisions when it comes to planning DIY in your home and what you should do if we find asbestos in your home.

**Please read this fully before you begin any DIY in your home.**

1. Before you begin any DIY work or we carry out any repairs or maintenance work, an asbestos survey will need to be carried out. The asbestos survey is extremely important for the health and safety of the people working on and living in your home.
2. Up to the 1999 asbestos was used in a variety of products found in the home, including: textured coatings to walls and ceilings - such as artex, cement panels in heater cupboards, gardens sheds, guttering, soffits, thermoplastic floor tiles and even toilet cisterns!
3. The word 'asbestos' strikes fear into many hearts, but if asbestos is found in your home it doesn't mean that you are being exposed to dangerous materials.

Asbestos causes problems when fibres are released into the air, many of the asbestos products commonly found in the home do not release fibres because they are in good condition or are mixed with materials that hold the asbestos together. Textured coatings are one of the most common asbestos products found in the home.

**Before you begin any DIY or make any alterations to your home please contact the St Leger Homes of Doncaster Customer Improvement team (01302 862270) to get advice about the permission required before you start any works.**  
Email: [COI@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:COI@stlegerhomes.co.uk)  
Web page: [www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/my-home/coi/](http://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/my-home/coi/)



**If you think you have damaged or disturbed any asbestos please contact St. Leger Homes on 01302 862862. To be passed to the Asbestos team. We will arrange to have a look at the material in question and consider what action may be necessary to make it safe.**

## **Why have I been sent information about asbestos based materials in my home?**

Asbestos is associated with a number of serious diseases, and is closely regulated to protect everyone's health.

## **So what are these health risks?**

The risk is only related to inhaling significant asbestos fibres. There is often a long period (many years) between inhaling asbestos fibres and the onset of disease. Exposure to asbestos fibres in the past has resulted in thousands of deaths from these diseases.

Where there is no significant fibres associated with an asbestos based material, however, there is no risk to health.

## **If there is an asbestos based material in my home, why not remove it straight away?**

Disturbing asbestos materials, which are in good condition, will be liable to produce asbestos fibres and increase health risks. Materials in good condition and unlikely to be disturbed do not cause health problems. If materials are in poor condition where significant fibres can be released we need to consider either removing them, or encapsulating them to seal in any asbestos.

If we need to do general building works to your home, disturbing asbestos that could be there may be unavoidable. It is at this time that we would most likely consider removing these materials, with all the necessary safeguards in place to protect customers and building workers.

## **I think I may have disturbed or damaged an asbestos based material in my home – what should I do?**

Please Contact St. Leger Homes on 01302 862862 to be passed to the Asbestos team. We will arrange to have a look at the material in question and consider what action may be necessary to make it safe.



## **Textured Coatings (commonly called Artex) containing asbestos**

This type of material has been widely used in Council properties. Older artex contained a small quantity of asbestos. This material is very hard, and is very unlikely to produce any fiber release if left alone.

### **Is it OK for customers to sand or scrape off old artex which contains asbestos?**

No! This could generate asbestos fibres into the air – Please Contact St. Leger Homes on 01302 862862 to be passed to the Asbestos team for advice. We will arrange to have a look at the material with you and discuss options.

### **Can I decorate walls and ceilings coated with old artex which contains asbestos?**

Normal emulsion painting is not a problem, but do not sand or scrape the material. If you notice any damaged areas. Please Contact St. Leger Homes on 01302 862862 to be passed to the Asbestos team for advice.

### **What about hanging a picture on a wall coated with old artex, which contains asbestos?**

Tapping in a standard picture hook is not a problem. Never attempt to drill or screw through artex containing asbestos, as this could potentially release fibres.

### **What if my walls/ceilings are covered with old artex, which contains asbestos and I want to repair, or re-skim the plaster?**

This could pose a problem. Please Contact St. Leger Homes on 01302 862862 to be passed to the Asbestos team for advice.

### **Can I remove and dispose of plastic floor tiles which contain asbestos?**

No, however the likelihood of plastic floor tiles producing any significant quantity of asbestos fibres is very low, as are the associated health risks, but caution is required. However, there are Environmental and Waste Regulations which require all waste asbestos materials to be safely transported and disposed of properly.

Please Contact St. Leger Homes on 01302 862862 to be passed to the Asbestos team for advice.

## Can I overlay old plastic floor tiles which contain asbestos with another floor covering?

Generally, yes, this is not a problem provided that no sanding or scraping is involved. Nailing down floor coverings or “gripper rods” though the tiles will not produce harmful asbestos fibres.

If in doubt please Contact St. Leger Homes on 01302 862862 to be passed to the Asbestos team for advice.

## I have noticed some broken pieces of floor tile which I think contain asbestos. Is my health at risk?

No, even broken pieces of plastic tile do not produce any significant fibre release, so there should be no significant health risk. However any broken floor tiles need to be reported to SLHD as a responsive repair request.

Please Contact St. Leger Homes on 01302 862862. To be passed to the Asbestos team for advice and we will help in arranging safe disposal.

