

# ASBESTOS & You



Quick guide for trades



**Asbestos didn't disappear when it was banned in the UK. It could be in the house or building you are working on right now.**

**Left alone, it isn't dangerous. However, once disturbed, tiny asbestos fibres are released which can prove lethal if breathed in, causing lung disease and cancer.**

**Make sure you know the basics about identifying asbestos and what to do when you come across it.**

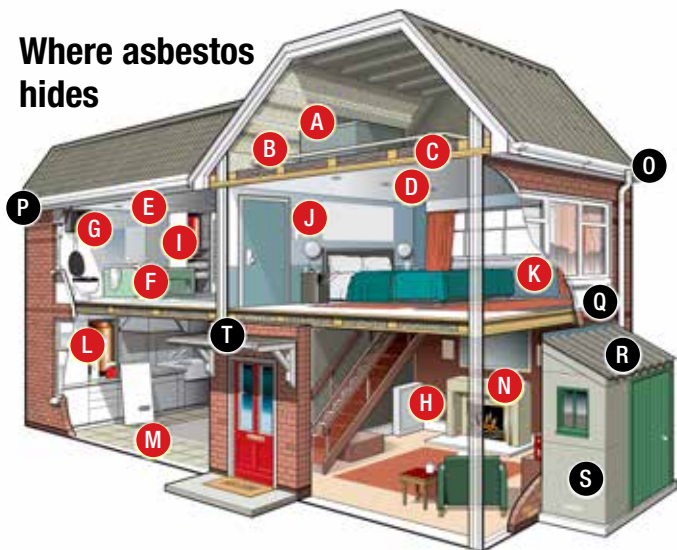
# **This guide will help you deal with asbestos on every job.**

## **Did you know?**

- 5,000 die every year from asbestos related diseases.
- Every tradesperson is likely to undertake work in a building that contains asbestos at some point.
- There is no cure for asbestosis once it has developed
- Asbestos can be in any building built before the year 2000.
- Asbestos remains in millions of homes, business premises and public buildings today.
- Even small jobs like drilling a hole can expose you to the danger.
- If your work is likely to disturb asbestos, you must take action to ensure that you and others are not exposed to danger.

# ASBESTOS & You

## Where asbestos hides



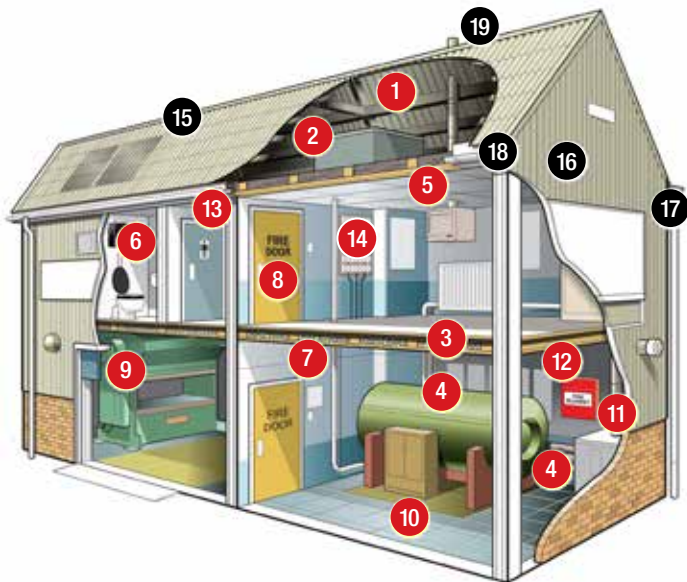
### Residential property – Inside

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>A</b> Asbestos cement water tank                               | <b>J</b> AIB partition wall  |
| <b>B</b> Pipe lagging   | <b>K</b> AIB interior window panel                                       |
| <b>C</b> Loose fill insulation                                    | <b>L</b> AIB around boiler, storage heaters and warm air heating systems |
| <b>D</b> Textured decorative coating eg Artex                     | <b>M</b> Vinyl floor tiles & bitumen adhesives                           |
| <b>E</b> AIB ceiling tiles  | <b>N</b> AIB behind fire   |
| <b>F</b> AIB bath panel   |  |
| <b>G</b> Toilet seat and cistern                                  |  |
| <b>H</b> AIB behind fuse box                                      |  |
| <b>I</b> AIB airing cupboard and/or sprayed insulation coating on |  |

### Outside

- |   |
|---|
| <b>O</b> Asbestos cement gutters and downpipes                  |
| <b>P</b> Soffits - AIB or asbestos cement                       |
| <b>Q</b> AIB exterior window panel                              |
| <b>R</b> Asbestos cement roof                                   |
| <b>S</b> Asbestos cement panels                                 |
| <b>T</b> Roofing felt – roof undercloaking very commonly cement |

*AIB = Asbestos insulating board*



### Industrial property – Inside

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1</b> Sprayed coatings on ceilings, walls, beams and columns | <b>10</b> Vinyl floor tiles  |
| <b>2</b> Asbestos cement water tank                             | <b>11</b> AIB around boilers, storage heaters and warm air heating systems |
| <b>3</b> Loose fill insulation                                  | <b>12</b> Textiles eg fire blankets  |
| <b>4</b> Lagging on boilers and pipes                           | <b>13</b> Textured decorative coating on walls and ceilings eg Artex       |
| <b>5</b> AIB ceiling tiles                                      | <b>14</b> Electrical components including fuses/flashguards                |
| <b>6</b> Toilet seat and cistern                                |  |
| <b>7</b> AIB partition walls                                    |  |
| <b>8</b> AIB panels in fire doors                               |  |
| <b>9</b> Asbestos rope seals, gaskets and paper                 |  |

### Outside

- |   |
|---|
| <b>15</b> Asbestos cement roof                  |
| <b>16</b> Asbestos cement cladding              |
| <b>17</b> Asbestos cement gutters and downpipes |
| <b>18</b> Soffits - AIB or asbestos cement      |
| <b>19</b> Asbestos cement flue                  |

*AIB = Asbestos insulating board*

## Practical steps for every job

There is no safe level of asbestos exposure. Asbestos can be in places that you might not expect, so you could come into contact with it without knowing.

HSE Introduction to Asbestos Essentials (A0) is a good place to start. Asbestos Essentials are a series of task sheets that provide step by step guidance of good practice (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/a0.pdf>).

### Before you get started

- Consider doing some basic asbestos awareness training.
- Ask if a survey has been done or if a plan or an asbestos register is available.
- Check if the building was built or refurbished before the year 2000.
- If possible, plan the job to avoid disturbing any asbestos.

### On the job

- Be aware that hidden asbestos could still be found even if a survey has been done.
- Be aware of what to watch for and where it hides (pages 4 and 5).
- If you suspect asbestos, assume it is until proven otherwise.
- If you're not trained to work with asbestos and/or you are not prepared - **STOP WORK.**

## **If asbestos is disturbed**

If you discover or accidentally disturb asbestos during your work, stop work and see asbestos essentials (em1) for step by step guidance (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/em1.pdf>).

If disturbed it must be dealt with quickly and appropriately.

## **Remember**

Do not work on asbestos materials unless you have been trained and have a risk assessment and plan of work for that particular material. Asbestos awareness training does not allow you to work on asbestos. For more on training see [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).

Your company insurance will not cover you or others unless working with asbestos is specifically included and you have complied fully with the Regulations.

## **Asbestos: Non licensed and licensed work**

### **What is non-licensed asbestos work?**

Some materials are lower risk and you can work on them providing you have:

- appropriate training;
- a plan of work risk assessment compliant with Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012;
- company insurance to do so.

If in doubt assume it is licensed until proven otherwise.

### **What is licensed asbestos work?**

Some materials are high risk and it is illegal to work on these materials unless you hold an asbestos license.

### **Do not touch the following materials, they should only be worked on by a licensed asbestos contractor:**

- Asbestos loose fill insulation.
- Asbestos sprayed coating, known as limpet.
- Pre-formed insulation eg asbestos pipe lagging.
- Asbestos insulating board (AIB) eg removing ceiling tiles or panels, where the job takes more than two hours from start to finish.
- Large amounts of asbestos-containing debris or material eg clearing up after a fire, flood or water leak.

To find a licensed asbestos contractor visit [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing)



*Common asbestos-containing material:*

## **Loose fill asbestos insulation**



- Found in wall and floor cavities and lofts.
- Not always blue can be white

### **Do not touch!**

Any work on loose fill asbestos insulation needs a licensed asbestos contractor.

To find a licensed asbestos contractor visit [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing)

# ASBESTOS & You

*Common asbestos-containing material:*

## Lagging on pipes



- Asbestos insulation found on pipes;
- Often painted over or protected by outer coating.

### **Do not touch!**

Any work on asbestos lagging needs a licensed asbestos contractor.

To find a licensed asbestos contractor visit [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing)

*Common asbestos-containing material:*

## **Asbestos insulation board (AIB) – external**



AIB has many uses both inside and out. It can be found in many places on the outside of buildings including:

- cladding;
- panelling around windows;
- soffit boards (roof overhang – sits behind fascia at eaves level).

Work with AIB can easily release asbestos fibres. This material can only be worked on by suitably trained professionals and needs to be risk assessed by someone with sufficient knowledge, training and expertise.

To find a licensed asbestos contractor visit [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing)

# ASBESTOS & You

*Common asbestos-containing material:*

## **Asbestos insulation board (AIB) – internal**



**AIB ceiling tiles**



**AIB bath panel**

AIB has many uses both inside and out. It can be found in many places on the inside of buildings including:

- partition walls;
- bath panels;
- panels at the back of fire places;
- fire door panels;
- ceiling tiles.

Work with AIB can easily release asbestos fibres. This material can only be worked on by suitably trained professionals and needs to be risk assessed by someone with sufficient knowledge, training and expertise.

To find a licensed asbestos contractor visit [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing)

*Common asbestos-containing material:*

## **Spray coating insulation**



- Often found on the underside of roofs and sometimes sides of buildings and warehouses;
- Also used as fire protection on steel and reinforced concrete beams/columns and on underside of floors;
- Usually white or grey in colour with a rough surface, although they may have been painted.

To find a licensed asbestos contractor visit [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing)

# ASBESTOS & You

*Common asbestos-containing material:*

## **Gas/electric meter and fuse box**



**AIB back board**



**Asbestos flash guard**

- Often found in halls and under stairs;
- In old style fuse boxes each fuse wire may have an individual asbestos flash guard;
- The back panel may also be asbestos insulating board (AIB);
- Meters may sit on an AIB shelf or be separated by an AIB partition ceiling tiles.

Work with AIB can easily release asbestos fibres. This material can only be worked on by suitably trained professionals and needs to be risk assessed by someone with sufficient knowledge, training and expertise.

Some of these materials can be worked on by non-licensed work trained people. See the asbestos essentials task sheets (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm>).

To find a licensed asbestos contractor visit [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing)

*Common asbestos-containing material:*

## **Textured coatings, eg Artex**



- Often found on walls and ceilings;
- Never sand dry textured coatings or scrape off.

Although non-licensed work, appropriate training is required to work on these materials. See the asbestos essentials task sheets (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm>).

To find a licensed asbestos contractor visit [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing)

# ASBESTOS & You

*Common asbestos-containing material:*

## **Toilet seat and cistern**



- Can contain asbestos-reinforced materials;
- Where possible, remove in one piece without breaking up, so fibres are not released;
- Using a crowbar to lever from the wall could release asbestos fibres.

Some of these materials can be worked on by non-licensed work trained people. See the asbestos essentials task sheets (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm>).



*Common asbestos-containing material:*

## **Vinyl floor tiles**



**Vinyl floor tiles**



**Bitumen adhesive**

- Vinyl floor tiles and bitumen adhesive may contain asbestos;
- The tile backing paper may also contain asbestos;
- Never sand the floor.

Some of these materials can be worked on by non-licensed work trained people. See the asbestos essentials task sheets (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm>).

# ASBESTOS & You

*Common asbestos-containing material:*

## **Asbestos cement**



**Asbestos cement downpipe and corrugated asbestos sheet**

Asbestos cement has many uses inside and out, and can be found in many places including:

- water tanks, frequently found in older properties built before 1980, some cement water tanks are also spray coated;
- gutters and downpipes;
- wall panels;
- roofs;
- floors and paving.



**Asbestos cement panels and roof sheets / asbestos cement water tank**

Although non-licensed work, appropriate training is required to work on these materials. See the asbestos essentials task sheets (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm>).

To find a licensed asbestos contractor visit [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing)



Introduction to Asbestos Essentials

[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/a0.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/a0.pdf)

Find a licensed asbestos contractor

[www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos-licensing)

Training

[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2023

If you wish to reuse this information,  
visit [www.hse.gov.uk/copyright.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/copyright.htm) for details.

Printed and published by the Health and Safety Executive 02/23