Handling Asbestos-Containing Materials During Renovations, Demolitions and Fire Clean Up

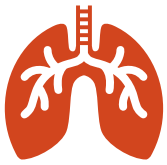
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Asbestos is a mineral fiber commonly used in many building materials and insulation until the 1970s, and can still be found in modern building materials. If these materials are disturbed, asbestos fibers can be released into the air and breathed in. You are at higher risk for health effects like lung cancer, mesothelioma and asbestosis if you are exposed to asbestos fibers.

For an online version of this fact sheet with clickable links go to HealthVermont.gov/HandlingAsbestos.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact ALRP@vermont.gov.

How does asbestos affect health?



Asbestos fibers can stay in the lungs for a long time after they are breathed in, increasing the risk of disease.

- Breathing asbestos fibers can lead to an increased risk of:
  - Asbestosis, or fibrosis in the lungs. People who get asbestosis have usually been exposed to high levels of asbestos for a long time.
  - Mesothelioma, which is cancer of the chest lining and abdominal cavity. The risk of mesothelioma increases with the number of fibers inhaled.
  - Lung cancer. Your risk of lung cancer is greater if you also smoke.

Where is asbestos found?



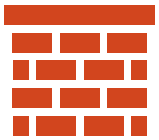
These household products may contain asbestos if they were made before the 1970s:

- Insulation:
  - Asbestos pipe wrap, blanket or paper tape in steam pipes, boilers and furnace ducts.
  - Cement sheet, millboard and paper around furnaces and wood burning stoves.
  - Gaskets in boilers, furnaces and wood stoves.

- Vermiculite insulation in attics and wall cavities. This type of insulation must **always** be treated as asbestos-containing.

- **Flooring:**
  - Resilient floor tiles made from vinyl asbestos, asphalt and rubber.
  - Backing on vinyl sheet flooring.
  - Adhesives and mastics used for installing floor tiles.
- **Walls, ceilings and roofing:**
  - Soundproofing or decorative materials sprayed on walls and ceilings.
  - Patching, joint compounds, popcorn ceilings and textured paints.
  - Asbestos cement roofing, shingles and siding.

Is there asbestos in new construction?



Yes. Asbestos is not completely banned in the United States. Several modern building materials may still legally contain asbestos, including:

- Vinyl floor tiles and their adhesives and mastics.
- Cement shingles, sheets and pipes.
- Pipeline wrap
- Roofing felt and coatings
- Gaskets
- Non-roofing coatings

Do not assume that a building is free of asbestos based on when it was constructed.

Can asbestos be present in the remains of a building after a fire?



Yes, asbestos in a building will remain in the debris after a fire. There is a high risk for asbestos exposure after a fire if materials are not handled properly, as asbestos fibers are likely to dislodge from fire damaged materials.

Planning for building renovation, demolition or fire damage clean up



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Vermont Department of Health have specific requirements for handling asbestos during renovation, demolition or cleaning up after a fire.

The building owner must hire a Vermont-licensed asbestos inspector to look for asbestos containing materials before renovating, demolishing or cleaning up.

What happens if the inspector finds asbestos in the building?

The building owner must hire a Vermont-licensed asbestos abatement contractor to remove the asbestos-containing materials. The contractor must get a project permit from the Health Department before beginning work. **Find a Vermont-licensed asbestos abatement contractor at HealthVermont.gov/LicenseLookUp.**

The Vermont-licensed asbestos abatement contractor must remove asbestos-containing materials **before** renovation, demolition or fire clean up.

- If it is not safe to remove asbestos-containing materials before the demolition or clean up can start, all building materials and debris must be treated as asbestos.
    - A licensed asbestos abatement contractor must demolish, clean up and dispose of all waste from the structure according to the Department of Environmental Conservation's asbestos waste management policies.
- If the inspector finds vermiculite insulation, it should be treated as an asbestos-containing material.
    - According to Vermont's regulations, vermiculite insulation should always be treated as an asbestos-containing material regardless of the situation. **There is no approved testing method to determine if this type of insulation contains asbestos fibers.**

What happens if the inspector doesn't find asbestos in the building?

- **For renovation**: You may proceed with your project.
- **For demolition or fire damage clean up**: You must notify the Health Department within 10 working days before you start demolition with this form: TinyURL.com/VTDemo-Form. In some cases, you may also need to notify the Environmental Protection Agency.