



Asbestos information for builders

Asbestos can be found in many homes, workplaces, and buildings in Aotearoa New Zealand. Exposure to asbestos can cause serious health problems including lung cancer.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral made up of tiny fibres and used in building materials. When asbestos is disturbed or breaks down, asbestos fibres can be released into the air.

When asbestos fibres are in the air, they can be breathed in. Breathing in asbestos fibres can cause them to get trapped in your lungs, leading to serious health issues including lung cancer.

Asbestos fibres in the air are too small to be seen with the naked eye. Even if you cannot see any dust particles in the air, asbestos fibres may still be present.

What is the risk for builders?

Every tradesperson is likely to come into contact with asbestos at work at some point. In Aotearoa, more than 200 people die each year from diseases caused by asbestos. Builders are at risk of exposure to asbestos fibres in the air because they often work with or around materials that contain asbestos.

REMEMBER

If you are not sure if something contains asbestos, treat it like it is asbestos and stop work. Get it tested to make sure it is not asbestos before resuming work. If it is asbestos, depending on what work you have planned (such as refurbishment or demolition) it may have to be removed by an asbestos removal specialist before you can resume work. Scan the QR code to get more information.

Places where asbestos is often found



Sprayed coating on the ceiling
Common to many houses



Loose lagging in basement
High risk of excessive contamination



AC fencing in bad condition
Common to many houses



AC soffit and gable
Common to many houses



ACM type cladding and louvres
Common to light commercial



Packing AIB and bitumen
Common to houses on piles



Backing boards
Common to many houses particularly state houses



Paper backed vinyl
Floor covering in bathrooms and wet area may contain asbestos in the lino or backing. The asbestos fibres in the backing can become airborne when lifted



'Decramastic' metal pressed tile
Pressed metal roof tiles commonly known as decramastic tiles may have asbestos in the base mastic bitumen



Super six roof
Corrugated cement sheet containing asbestos commonly known as super 6 has asbestos in the composition. This type of product is approximately 50 years old and has reached the end of its economic life

If you find or suspect asbestos



Stop what you are doing



Do not disturb the asbestos material



Contact your supervisor, site manager, or an asbestos specialist

If you disturb asbestos



Stop what you are doing



Keep people away from the area



Leave the area



Minimise the spread of fibres



Contact your supervisor, site manager, or an asbestos specialist



Carefully remove and double bag contaminated clothing

More information

Scan the QR code for more information about asbestos.

