

Asbestos kills. It's best to test.

What to know before you DIY your home

worksafesask.ca/asbestos

TIPS FOR HOMEOWNERS AND CONTRACTORS TO STAY SAFE DURING HOME RENOVATIONS.

With the help of the internet, do-it-yourself (DIY) home renovations are more popular than ever. However, what YouTube and Pinterest might not be telling you is that DIY projects can put you and your family at risk of asbestos exposure.

Inhaling asbestos fibres can cause chronic, irreversible and life-threatening lung diseases.

These diseases, which can appear several decades after exposure, include asbestosis (a lung scarring disease), lung cancer and mesothelioma (a deadly form of cancer).

Here's everything you need to know about asbestos before you start knocking down walls or ripping up flooring.

The danger of asbestos

Although asbestos-containing products are generally safe when left undisturbed, they become brittle over time and can crumble and the microscopic fibres are 18,000 times thinner than a human hair. When renovating or working on your home, it's safer to assume asbestos materials are present and to take every precaution.

When you should test for asbestos

Asbestos products are banned in Canada, but asbestos-containing materials were still common in building products used for homes built before 1990. You can't tell if a material has asbestos just by looking at it. You should always test for asbestos if:

- you're doing DIY home renovation projects
- your home was built before 1990
- your home is damaged by a natural or human-made disaster
- you have crumbled, worn or broken asbestos-containing materials in your home

You can also check the [Saskatchewan Asbestos Registry](#) to see if the use of asbestos has been reported in your neighbourhood.

Where asbestos could be hiding in your home

Asbestos doesn't burn, which is why it was used in many products to resist heat. It could be anywhere. Common asbestos-containing materials are: built up roofing, shingles/siding, vermiculite insulation, ceiling tiles and coatings, popcorn ceilings, drywall and cement sheets, plaster putties and caulking, electrical switchboard panels, plumbing insulation, pipe and duct coverings, thermal boiler and fireplace insulation and many types of flooring.

You can visit WorkSafe Saskatchewan to explore an [interactive model](#) of where asbestos could be hiding in your home.

What to do if you find asbestos in your home

If left undisturbed, asbestos materials in good, stable condition are unlikely to release dangerous fibres and pose a health risk. If you do find asbestos, don't disturb it. Don't sweep, vacuum or dust possible asbestos debris and don't remove suspicious materials. Keep everyone out and limit activities in the area. Call an asbestos abatement company with trained and qualified personnel.

Hiring an asbestos abatement professional

If damaged asbestos-containing materials are not properly removed by an asbestos abatement company, they can endanger your life and the lives of others who come into contact with asbestos dust, fibres or raw asbestos materials. Research [asbestos abatement companies](#), ask for references and ask how they remove asbestos from properties. You and your loved ones will be safer when the threat of asbestos exposure is properly eliminated.

Do your homework

Now that you understand some of the dangers of asbestos, as well as the importance of properly removing it from a structure, you are better equipped to make the right decisions. For more information about asbestos, visit worksafesask.ca/asbestos and view our [asbestos abatement guide](#).

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