ASBESTOS

BE AWARE AND TAKE CARE



STAY SAFE AROUND ASBESTOS

What is asbestos?



Asbestos is a natural rock fibre that, in the past, was often used in building materials and other products. We now know that asbestos causes cancer and other serious health problems.

How does asbestos affect health?



When products containing asbestos get old or damaged, small fibres are released into the air. When people breathe in this dust, the fibres can get stuck in the lungs and cause diseases like cancer.

How do I stay safe around asbestos?



To avoid exposure and protect your health, **be aware and take care**:

1. Get to know the facts and learn to recognise which products might contain asbestos.
2. If you think you might have asbestos in your home, keep it painted and in good condition so that it doesn't release fibres.
3. Don't cut, drop, drill or break products that might have asbestos in them.
4. If you see discarded materials that look like they might have asbestos in them, do not move or re-use them without taking special precautions.
5. When you are buying new or re-used building materials, ask if they contain asbestos.

If you need to work with or remove materials that could contain asbestos, make sure that no dust is released and that you follow the appropriate guidelines.

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Where can asbestos be found?

There are a lot of places around the world that have old buildings and houses containing asbestos.
In the Pacific, the most common types of asbestos materials are found in roofing and walls.
It can also be found in guttering, water pipes and in flooring.



Roofing – Asbestos cement roofing is quite easy to recognise. It is corrugated (wavey) and grey in colour. Asbestos can also be found in cement roofing shingles/tiles.



Gutters and water pipes – Some gutters and pipes are made from asbestos cement.



Gardens – Sometimes asbestos sheeting is used to edge garden beds.



Walls – Asbestos wall sheeting (also called cladding) is common but can be hard to recognise because it looks very similar to other types of cladding.



Floors – Asbestos materials can sometimes be found in the lining used underneath tiles and in vinyl flooring.



Old buildings or sheds – Old or abandoned buildings may contain asbestos.



Ceilings – Some types of ceiling tiles contain asbestos.



Outside – Sometimes asbestos materials can be found in piles of rubbish, usually in places where houses have been knocked down or on building sites.



Shops – Sometimes people sell old asbestos building materials. Also, some new building materials might contain asbestos. It's always best to ask.

REMEMBER: If asbestos materials are in good condition there is no danger to your health. They only release dust when they are old, broken or damaged. For more information visit www.sprep/org/pacwaste

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