

Asbestos

Information for Queensland public housing tenants

How can I tell if my home contains asbestos?

If you live in a Queensland government home that was built before 1990, it may have asbestos in the materials used to build it. Many buildings in Queensland built in this period contain asbestos.

Asbestos-containing materials have mainly been used as wall and floor sheeting, roofing and pipes. Exposed surfaces are sealed and covered in paint.

The department has installed asbestos warning stickers in social housing properties built before 1990, to alert tenants to the possible presence of asbestos containing material. The stickers can be found inside the electrical meter box door, and also next to the smoke alarm sticker on the back of your linen/pantry cupboard door.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the common name for a group of naturally occurring silicate minerals that form into microscopic fibres.

From the 1940s to the late 1980s, asbestos was used as a binding product in home building materials such as wall and floor sheeting, roofing and pipes.

It was also used in thermal insulation, fire proofing, brake linings, clutches, etc. Most Australian homes built during this period may include asbestos containing materials.

Does asbestos present a health risk?

If asbestos is bonded and its fibres are not airborne, it is not a risk to health.

If asbestos containing materials are disturbed or broken and the microscopic fibres become airborne, they can become a health risk when breathed into the lungs.

Unsafe removal or damage of asbestos-containing materials can also contaminate the ground around your home.

My home may contain asbestos—what should I do?

If you think your home has damage to asbestos-containing materials, contact your nearest Housing Service Centre's maintenance service.

Do not:

- disturb the area that has the damage
- try to do any work that involves sawing, drilling, water blasting, grinding or sanding at your property before getting approval from your nearest Housing Service Centre
- dust, sweep or vacuum debris that may contain asbestos
- use abrasive brushes, pads or power strippers to remove wax from an asbestos floor tile
- remove vinyl sheeting or vinyl tile floor coverings
- remove ceiling finishes to the underside of the concrete floor of the unit above
- sand or try to level a floor after vinyl sheeting or vinyl tile floor coverings have been removed by someone else.

Helpful information

- Queensland Government: information for public housing tenants – asbestos: www.qld.gov.au/housing/public-community-housing/asbestos/
- Asbestos in Queensland: www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/injury-prevention-safety/asbestos
- WorkCover Queensland: www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/injury-prevention-safety/asbestos
- Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia: www.asbestosdiseases.org.au
- Queensland Asbestos Related Disease Support Society: www.asbestos-disease.com.au/
- Asbestos Disease Foundation of Australia: www.adfa.org.au/