

Asbestos kills: Protect yourself!

You are more at risk than you think



This is a web-friendly version of leaflet INDG419

Are you an electrician, plumber, heating and ventilation engineer, joiner or do you work in a similar building or maintenance trade?

Your future health is still at serious risk from asbestos

- 1000 people who worked in these trades die from cancer every year as a result of breathing in asbestos fibres.
- There is **still** a lot of asbestos material in buildings.
- Any building built or refurbished before 2000 is **still** likely to contain asbestos.

You must protect yourself!

The main precaution you should take is:

Don't work if you are unsure whether asbestos is present. Your boss or the customer should tell you whether it is. If they haven't - ask them or your safety representative.



Other important precautions are:

Don't work if:

- asbestos is present but you have not been trained to work safely with it;
- the asbestos materials are sprayed coatings, board or insulation and lagging on pipes and boilers – only a contractor with a licence should work on these.



(For an idea of what these materials look like and where you are likely to find them see the photographs on page 4.)

Don't disturb asbestos if you can help it

Only work with asbestos if:

- you have had asbestos training, the work has been properly planned and the right controls are in place (eg you have the right equipment);
- the materials are asbestos cement, textured coatings and others which do not need a licence.



(For an idea of what these materials look like and where you are likely to find them see the photographs on page 4.)

If you work with asbestos:

Minimise dust:



Keep materials damp – not too wet



Use hand tools – not power tools



Clean up as you go – use a special vacuum cleaner, (class H) not a brush



Double-bag asbestos waste and label the bags properly

Wear:



Suitable disposable overalls and boots without laces or disposable boot covers



A properly fitted suitable mask (eg disposable FFP3 type)



Don't smoke, eat or drink in the work area

If you take a break:



When you finish work:

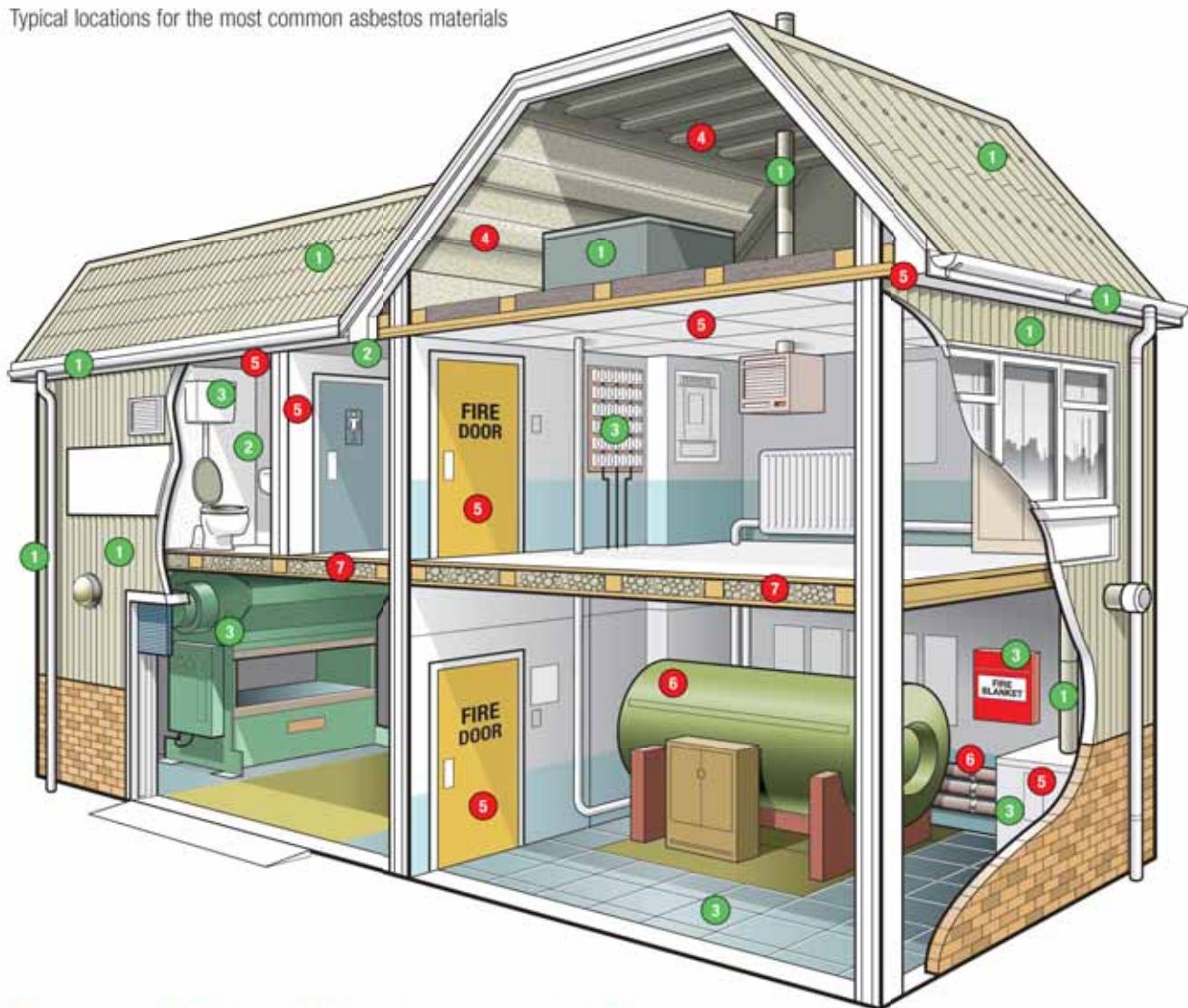
- Decontaminate yourself – wipe down your overalls with a damp rag and remove them before removing your mask.
- Put disposable items (eg overalls) in asbestos waste bags and dispose of them properly.
- Don't take overalls home to wash.



Remember if you are unsure at any time - stop work and seek advice

You can also download Asbestos essentials task sheets from the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE's) website (see back page for details). These provide detailed guidance on how to carry out a range of tasks you do not need a licence for.

Typical locations for the most common asbestos materials



Where am I likely to find asbestos materials?

Normally non-licensed materials

- 1 Asbestos cement products
- 2 Textured coatings
- 3 Floor tiles, textiles and composites

Normally licensed materials

- 4 Sprayed coatings on walls, beams/columns
- 5 Asbestos insulating board
- 6 Lagging
- 7 Loose asbestos in ceiling or floor cavity

Note: This diagram does not show all possible uses and locations of asbestos materials. A detailed survey will be required to identify all asbestos materials in a building.

Only work on these (non-licensed materials) if you've had the proper training and have the right protective equipment and controls in place



Asbestos cement wall panel



Asbestos cement roof



Textured coating



Textured coating



Floor tiles



Asbestos fire blanket

Don't work on these materials - you need a licence to do so



Sprayed coatings on ceiling walls, beams/columns



Sprayed coatings on wall



Asbestos insulating board ceiling tiles



Asbestos insulating board panels



Asbestos insulation on pipes



Asbestos lagging on pipes

Find out more

You can find out more about working with asbestos by contacting:

- your safety representative;
- HSE's Infoline (see details opposite);
- your nearest HSE office; or
- your Local Authority Environmental Health Department (as listed in your telephone directory).

You can buy face masks and other personal protective equipment at most safety equipment supply shops. Class H vacuum cleaners can be rented at tool hire shops.

There is also a lot of information on HSE's asbestos web pages at:
www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/index.htm. This includes the *Asbestos essentials* task sheets referred to on page 3 and leaflets you can download free.

HSE publishes a range of free and priced guidance on working with asbestos, including:

Asbestos kills: A quick guide to protecting yourself Pocket card INDG418
HSE Books 2007 (single copy free or priced packs of 25 ISBN 978 0 7176 6271 5)
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg418.pdf

Further information

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books,
PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA
Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995
Website: www.hsebooks.co.uk (HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website:
www.hse.gov.uk.)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline
Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566 Textphone: 0845 408 9577
e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services,
Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

This leaflet is available in priced packs of 15 from HSE Books, ISBN 978 0 7176 6259 3.
Single copies are free and a web version can be found at:
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg419.pdf.

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