

# A guide for residents about asbestos

## What is it?

Asbestos is a natural mineral found in rocks all over the world. It was once used in a wide range of building materials and products.

## Why can asbestos be a problem?

Even if there is asbestos in your home, it is usually not a problem. Asbestos only becomes a problem if it is disturbed, damaged or deteriorates with age. If this happens asbestos releases tiny fibres into the air which are easily inhaled.



## What will Lewisham Homes do?

It is our responsibility to manage and contain asbestos. Sometimes we may have to remove asbestos if it is damaged and poses a risk. We take advice of qualified analysts where this is the case. To gather information about the location of asbestos, we are surveying communal areas of our properties. We will hold the details of these surveys on an asbestos register.

Remember, if the asbestos is in good condition and is unlikely to be disturbed or damaged, it does not pose a health risk and can be left in place. In some cases the asbestos will have to be removed or sealed and left in place to prevent releasing the asbestos fibres.

## Identifying asbestos

You cannot tell whether a product contains asbestos just by looking at it. However, if you see the sticker pictured below in communal areas you should be aware that it has been identified as having asbestos, this means it has been surveyed and deemed to be safe as long as it is managed correctly and not disturbed.



  
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[www.lewishamhomes.org.uk](http://www.lewishamhomes.org.uk)

## What to do if you think you have asbestos in your home

Never touch or disturb materials you think could contain asbestos. Licensed specialists must deal with it, contact our Health and Safety team for advice on the details below.



### If you are planning home improvements:

- ▶ Do not drill, sand, scrape or cut into a wall or surface if you are unsure of its construction.
- ▶ Consult a specialist if you should find what you think is asbestos. Asbestos is only dangerous when damaged or moved, without being made safe first.
- ▶ Seek specialist advice from a licensed asbestos removal company; The Health and Safety Executive; or your local environmental health department.

#### Useful contacts

Lewisham Homes Health and Safety

020 8613 4290

[asbestos@lewishamhomes.org.uk](mailto:asbestos@lewishamhomes.org.uk)

The Health and Safety Executive

0845 881 165

[www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos)