

# Floor Tiles that may contain Asbestos

Asbestos Information Sheet No 2 – October 2008

If you are reading this leaflet then it is possible that you have some Asbestos in your home, or we have confirmed that you have and we need to remove it.

**DO NOT WORRY** – Many homes in the UK have Asbestos in them, and unless it is damaged it is perfectly safe. Removing it is also perfectly safe, but we need to remove it before we can start work.

This leaflet will tell you what Asbestos is, how we will remove it, and how we will keep you and your family safe while we are doing it.

If you have any questions, please ask us. We are doing this work for you.

## What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a natural rock. When crushed it turns into small fibres that look like needles of glass under the microscope. It was used for many purposes until recently, and is a very good insulator of heat and electricity, and can be turned into useful roofing tiles, flooring tiles, and added to plaster in textured ceilings such as artex. However, we now know that Asbestos is dangerous and the needle-like fibres when inhaled can cause terrible illnesses. In the UK Asbestos is no longer used, but many millions of buildings still have Asbestos in them.

There are 3 main types of Asbestos; White, Brown and Blue. White is not too bad, but Brown and Blue are very dangerous. The type of Asbestos most commonly found in UK homes is luckily the White type.

## How can it hurt me?

Asbestos is only dangerous if the fibres are breathed in and get into your lungs. People who get very ill with Asbestos get an illness called Asbestosis where the fibres get stuck in the lung and can cause a form of cancer, but you have to breathe in a lot to get this. The types and levels of Asbestos found in the home are almost always low risk, and as they are held inside the floor tile or ceiling texture they can't get into the air anyway. If the tile is broken or the ceiling damaged there is a small risk, so that is why we have to remove it so we can start work.

For more information on Asbestos, visit the Health & Safety Executives website

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

Please don't worry – we do this all the time and are determined to look after you.

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## So what happens when the Asbestos removal contractor arrives?

The asbestos removal contractor will want to set up a mobile hygiene unit (like the one in the picture) as close as possible to your property. This unit is for the operatives to wash themselves at the end of the job. Although many units are self-contained, it would help if they could have access to a cold water tap and a 240v mains electric supply. You can help by providing a parking area and access to a tap & electricity.



## Do I have to move any furniture, fixtures or fittings?

It depends on whether or not any of the items have been directly affected by the asbestos-containing tiles. If they have, they will need to be cleaned by the removal contractor and should not be moved. Items that have not should be removed before the removal contractors arrive on site. This includes items such as wardrobes, cupboards, sofas, electrical items, tables, chairs etc. If you have difficulties moving things, then please discuss this in advance with your Personal Claims Advisor. If any items of furniture cannot be removed prior to the asbestos removal works then every precaution will be taken to protect it and its contents.

## What about me, my family & pets?

As there will be a number of people working in the property, and therefore going in and out to the company vehicles for equipment, we advise that wherever possible people are not present in or near the working area. We only require one person to be present during the operation. Please keep all pets and children away from the works.

## When you remove the asbestos, will I be safe from exposure?



Yes. The team will protect you totally.

To keep our team safe, even though the risk is low, they will wear coveralls and respiratory protective equipment.

The floor tiles are usually stuck to the floor with sticky black bitumen, and the team will remove this as well – it's not a fun job! The team will use scrapers and sometimes a shovel to remove the tiles – this is normal and safe.

Please stay out of the area until the work is completed to avoid moving the stick bitumen around your home.

We'll then safely take the materials away and dispose of them, making sure they stay safe for ever.