

Asbestos hazards in demolition, renovation, and salvage

Asbestos causes more worker deaths than any other workplace disease – what can you do?

Asbestos is extremely hazardous to people’s health. Demolishing or renovating houses containing asbestos products can release asbestos fibres, which are extremely fine and can stay in the air for hours.

Unprotected workers exposed to asbestos-contaminated air can breathe in the fibres. This may cause serious health problems, such as lung disease and cancer.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a strong, fire-resistant mineral fibre. In the past, asbestos was used as insulation against heat or noise, and for fire protection. It was also added to materials such as cement and plaster to give them more structural strength.

Where was asbestos used in older homes?

Until the late 1980s, more than 3,000 products containing asbestos were used in house construction. The drawing on the back of this page shows potential sources of asbestos once commonly used in residential construction. When demolishing or renovating older houses, there is a high probability of encountering asbestos-containing materials, which may release asbestos fibres and put unprotected workers at risk.

What are my responsibilities as an employer or owner/builder?

You are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all workers present at your workplace. You are also responsible for protecting the public from any asbestos-contaminated air.

When doing any demolition, renovation, or salvage work, you must follow WorkSafeBC OHS regulations, specifically Part 20: Demolition and Part 6: Asbestos.

What do I have to do before demolishing, renovating, or salvaging buildings or structures?

1. You must have a qualified person inspect the site to identify any asbestos that may be handled, disturbed, or removed. OHS Guideline G6.6-3 outlines the acceptable qualifications for persons conducting asbestos hazard assessments.

2. You must submit to WorkSafeBC a Notice of Project form for asbestos at least 24 hours before any asbestos removal or other work begins.
3. You must have trained and qualified asbestos-removal workers properly remove and dispose of all material containing asbestos.

You should receive written confirmation that the asbestos specified for removal on the Notice of Project form has been properly removed.

For more information, refer to OHS Guideline G20.112, which explains the hazards associated with the uncontrolled release of asbestos. It also provides information on the following topics:

- What constitutes a compliant asbestos inspection.
- Arranging for and confirming the safe removal of asbestos.
- What to do if you encounter more materials suspected to contain asbestos during demolition or salvage work.

What should I do if I find more asbestos-containing material once work has started?

Stop work immediately. Have trained and qualified asbestos-removal workers properly remove these materials before resuming work.

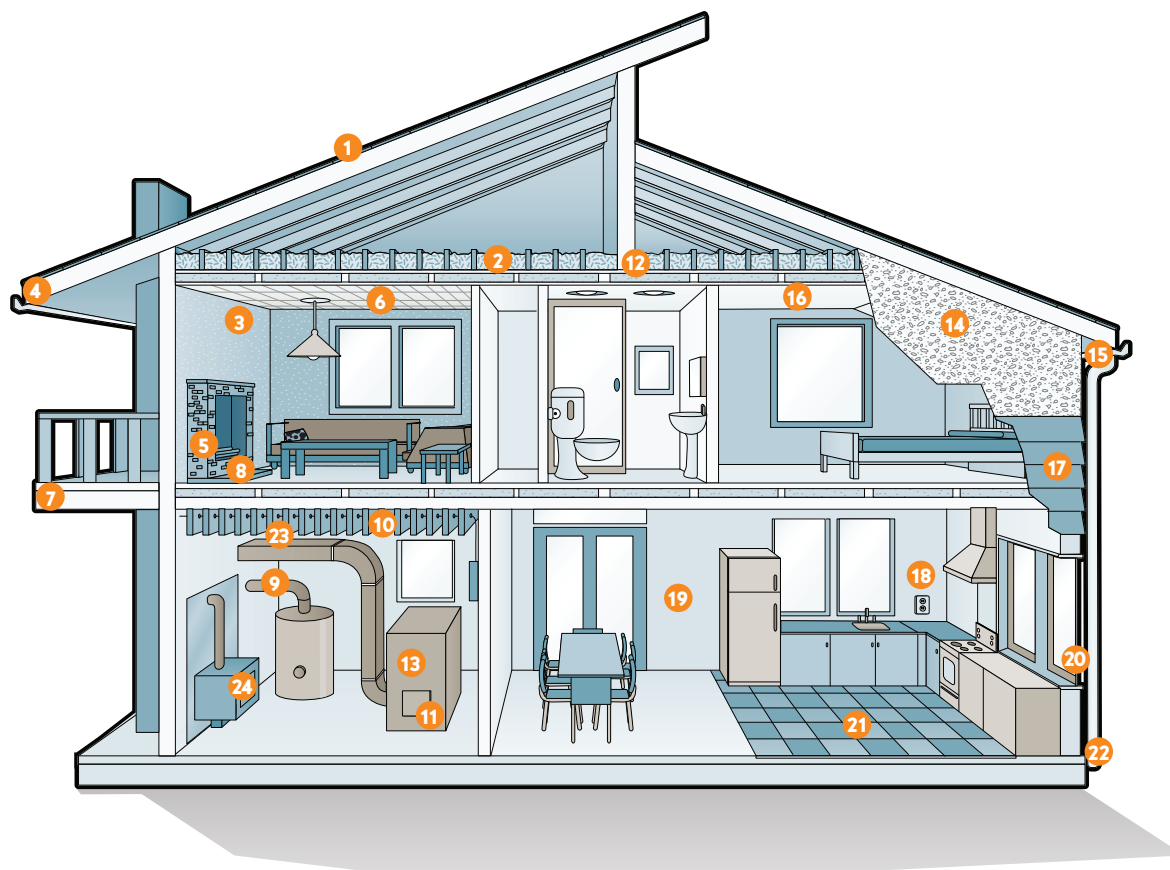
Where can I find additional information about asbestos and Notice of Project forms?

You can submit a Notice of Project form online at worksafebc.com. Asbestos survey and removal companies can be found in the Yellow Pages under Asbestos Abatement & Removal, Health & Safety Consultants, or Environmental Consultants.

For more information about asbestos and what your responsibilities are, check out hiddenkiller.ca or go to worksafebc.com for the following resources:

- *Safe Work Practices for Handling Asbestos* booklet
- Safety at Work Construction webpage
- OHS Guideline G6.8: Procedures for abatement of asbestos-containing material during house and building demolition/renovation

Potential sources of asbestos in the home.



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| 1 Roof felt and shingles | 9 Pipe insulation | 15 Soffit boards can be made of asbestos cement or asbestos insulating board | 20 Window putty |
| 2 Loose, blown-in insulation, such as vermiculite | 10 Main panel and fuse box; each fuse wire has an individual asbestos flash guard | 16 Textured or stipple-coated walls and ceilings | 21 Flooring: vinyl tiles and linoleum sheet flooring; flooring adhesive |
| 3 Incandescent light fixture backing | 11 Door and gasket covers | 17 Asbestos cement (transite) board siding and undersheeting | 22 Downpipes can be made of asbestos cement |
| 4 Roof gutters can be made of asbestos cement | 12 Backing behind recessed lighting | 18 Outlets and switches | 23 Insulation on electrical wires |
| 5 Artificial fireplace logs and ashes | 13 Boiler and furnace insulation | 19 Gypsum board filling compound, and patching and joint compound for walls and ceilings | 24 Heat reflector for wood stove |
| 6 Acoustic tiles | 14 Asbestos can be found in stucco | | |
| 7 Deck under-sheeting | | | |
| 8 Asbestos pad under the fireplace hearth | | | |

Please note: This floor plan depicts a typical older home. Asbestos use has declined significantly; homes built before 1990 are more likely to contain asbestos products.