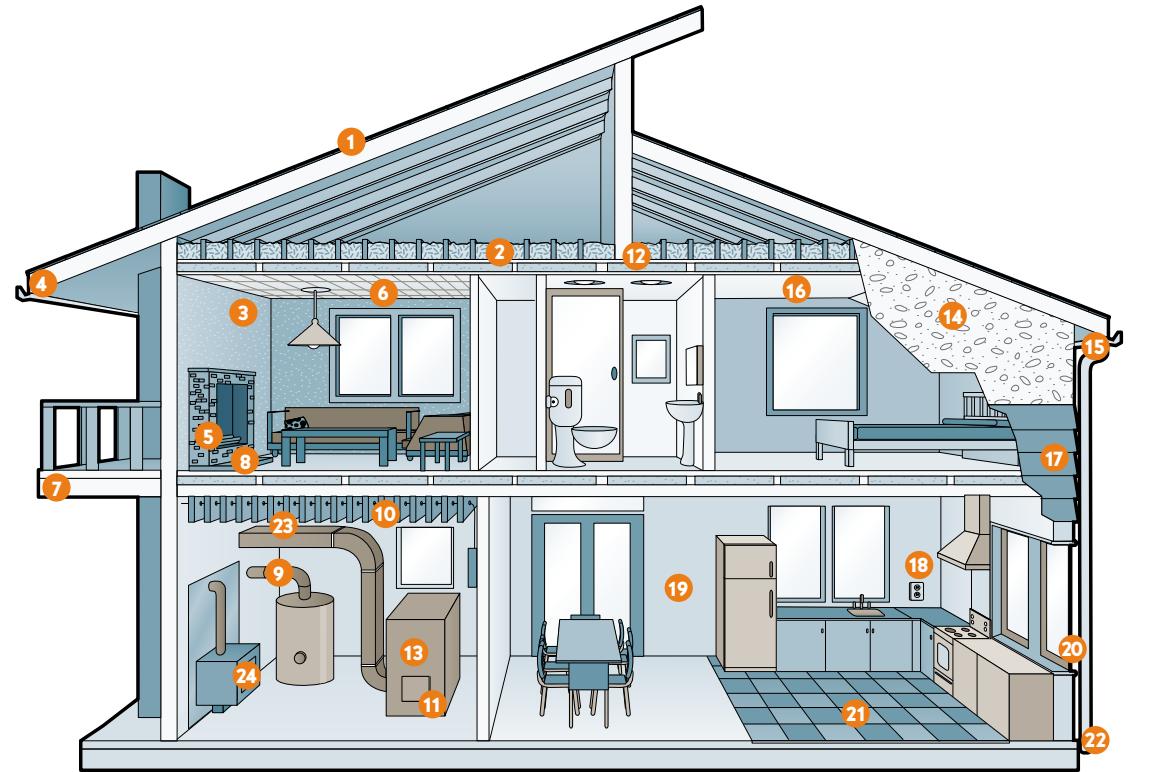


## Potential sources of asbestos in the home



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

## More information for homeowners

Homeowners can contact the following for information on preventing exposure to asbestos when doing home renovations on an older home:

**Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)**  
Phone: **1.800.668.2642**  
Website: [www.cmhc.ca](http://www.cmhc.ca)

On the website, search for "asbestos." The online publication 'Asbestos' is also available free in print as part of the 'About Your House' series.

**Health Canada**  
Phone: **604.666.2083**  
Website: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

On the website, look for "asbestos" and "vermiculite" in the A-Z index.

**WORK SAFE BC**



**BC Cancer Agency**  
CARE & RESEARCH  
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority



**WORK SAFE BC**

## 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 early 1980s, many products containing asbestos were used in house construction. Some products, such as asbestos-containing vermiculite insulation, were used in homes right up until the late 1980s. The drawing in this pamphlet shows many possible sources of asbestos in older homes. When you are renovating or demolishing an older house, there is a high probability of encountering asbestos-containing materials.

If asbestos-containing materials are in good condition and left intact, they do not pose a significant danger of releasing asbestos fibres into the air you breathe. However, these materials are hazardous when they deteriorate or are disturbed, such as when they are handled, sanded, drilled into, or broken up so that they crumble. To avoid disturbing asbestos-containing materials, you must know where they are before you begin renovations.

## What are the hazards of asbestos?

Renovating or demolishing houses containing asbestos products can release asbestos fibres, which are extremely fine and can stay in the air for hours. Breathing in asbestos fibres may cause serious health problems, including lung disease and cancer.

Asbestosis is the name given to scarring and stiffening of the lungs caused by inhaling asbestos dust over many years. It makes breathing difficult and may lead to fatal diseases such as pneumonia and heart disease. Exposure to asbestos can also cause lung cancer and mesothelioma, which is a rare cancer of the linings of the lungs and abdomen.

Asbestos-related diseases usually develop many years after a person has been exposed to asbestos. The risk of developing these diseases increases with the amount of asbestos in the air you inhale and the length of time you are exposed. Smokers are at an increased risk.



As a minimum, a respirator fitted with a NIOSH 100 (HEPA) filter should be worn to provide a basic level of protection. In some situations, other types of respirators may be required.

## What can homeowners do?

If you are a homeowner doing your own renovations and not employing other workers, you will want to take precautions to avoid inhaling asbestos fibres and contaminating your home. Asbestos-containing materials should be identified and removed by someone trained in asbestos removal and wearing protective clothing and a respirator. Contact your municipality to find out how to dispose of asbestos-containing materials so that they do not contaminate landfills.

Contact the **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation** at **1.800.668.2642** or **Health Canada** at **604.666.2083** for information for homeowners.

## What must employers and workers do before beginning renovation or demolition work?

Employers and owners/builders are responsible for the health and safety of workers employed on the site. They must have a qualified person inspect the site to identify any asbestos that may be handled, disturbed, or removed. For more information on acceptable credentials for asbestos consultants, refer to **OHS Guideline G6.6-3: Qualifications**, part of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation materials at [worksafecbc.com](http://worksafecbc.com).

The removal must be done by trained and qualified workers using the proper protective equipment.

For more information on working safely around asbestos, please call our Prevention Information Line at **603.276.3100**, or toll-free at **1.888.621.7233**.

## Where can I find qualified help?

Asbestos survey and removal companies can be found in the Yellow Pages, or online, by searching Asbestos Abatement and Removal, Health and Safety Consultants, or Environmental Consultants.

## More information for employers and workers

If you have additional questions about the safe removal of asbestos, please call our Prevention Information Line at **604.276.3100** or toll-free **1.888.621.7233**.

Visit [worksafecbc.com](http://worksafecbc.com) for these helpful resources on asbestos abatement:

- **Safe Work Practices for Handling Asbestos**
- **Safety at Work Centre for Construction**
- **Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Part 6 (asbestos)**
- **Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Part 20 (demolition)**
- **OHS Guideline G6.8: Procedures for abatement of asbestos-containing material (ACM) during house and building demolition/renovation**
- **OHS Guideline G20.112: Hazardous materials - Asbestos**
- **Notice of Project Form for Asbestos or Lead (52E49)**