

Asbestos Hazards Due to Flooding

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral fiber. It was used in more than 3,000 different construction materials and manufactured products. Asbestos products may have been installed in homes and businesses as part of new construction or remodeling through the early 1980s.

When asbestos-containing materials (ACM) are disturbed, the asbestos breaks down into very fine fibers. These fibers can become airborne and trapped in lung tissue when breathed. Asbestos fibers can cause lung scarring and cancers, 30 years after exposure. There is no known safe level of asbestos exposure. Because of this health threat, it is highly recommended that ACM that has been damaged due to flooding, be repaired, enclosed, encapsulated or removed. Any ACM that is removed must be properly containerized and disposed of at a landfill approved to accept ACM.

How do I find out if it's asbestos?

Check for asbestos markings on the material or its packaging. If there are no markings or you can't find the original packaging, hire a Minnesota-certified asbestos inspector to sample the material or perform an asbestos inspection. Contact MDH at 651-201-4620 or visit our web site: www.health.state.mn.us/asbestos for companies that perform sampling and inspections.

How do I dispose of asbestos?

Since asbestos is a hazardous material, it must go to specific landfills. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) maintains a list of landfills accepting asbestos waste. Contact the MPCA for this list at 651-296-6300 or at: www.pca.state.mn.us/programs/asbestos_p.html

There is flood-damaged asbestos in my home/building. What should I do about it?

Homeowners may legally repair, encapsulate and remove asbestos themselves, but only from the single-family residence they own and occupy.

However, MDH strongly recommends hiring an asbestos abatement contractor to do this work for the protection and safety of the occupants of the building.

If you hire a contractor to enclose, encapsulate or remove ACM, they must be licensed by MDH as an asbestos abatement contractor. Asbestos abatement contractors employ state-of-the-art techniques to handle the asbestos safely. Air monitoring is also performed to ensure that the air in the building meets acceptable standards at the end of the project. Removing the material may be the best option, if the ACM is extensively damaged or if it will be disturbed.

My home/building has to be demolished because of flood damage. What should I do about the asbestos in it?

Homes or buildings scheduled for demolition must have friable ACM and certain other forms of ACM removed prior to demolition. Friable ACM must be removed by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor. If a building is already down due to flooding, the site must be secured, and posted with asbestos warning signs. A licensed asbestos abatement contractor must be used to remove the ACM from the demolition debris when feasible. In certain situations when ACM cannot be separated from the demolition debris, the contractor may transport and dispose of the debris as bulk asbestos-containing waste.

What materials contain asbestos?

The following is a short list of some of the more common asbestos containing materials found in homes and buildings:

- Adhesives
- Appliance components
- Ceiling products
 - Ceiling texture (Popcorn texture)
 - Ceiling tiles
 - Ceiling tile mastic
- Cement-asbestos board (Transite) products
 - Chimney flue lining
 - Ducts
 - Pipes
 - Shingles
 - Siding
 - Wall panels
- Electrical products
 - Cloth wire insulation
 - Electrical panels
- Heating and Cooling System products
 - Boiler insulation
 - Duct work insulation

- Furnace insulation
- Gaskets
- Heat shields (paper and corrugated cardboard)
- Pipe insulation
- Tank insulation
- Flooring Products
 - Asphalt floor tiles
 - Floor tile mastic
 - Vinyl floor tiles
 - Vinyl sheet flooring (linoleum)
- Paints and coatings
- Roofing Products
 - Base flashing
 - Felt
 - Shingles
 - Tar or "Black Jack"
- Table pads
- Wall applications
 - Caulking and putties
 - Spackling compounds
 - Plaster
 - Vinyl wall coverings
 - Wallboard or sheetrock
 - Window glazing
- Wallboard joint compound
- Vermiculite
 - Attic and wall insulation
 - Fireplace decoration
 - Gardening products

For more information, contact:
 Minnesota Department of Health
 Environmental Health Division/Asbestos-Lead
 Compliance Unit
 651-201-4620
 Email: health.asbestos-lead@state.mn.us
 Website: www.health.state.mn.us/asbestos

*To obtain this information in a different format, call
 651-201-5000 or 1-800-657-3908*

REVISED: FORMAT
 FEBRUARY 2015