

# Minnesota Department of Health Fact Sheet

## **DISASTER QUICK TIPS: ASBESTOS**

### **What is asbestos?**

Asbestos is a natural mineral fiber and is mined out of the ground. Asbestos is resistant to chemicals and it does not burn. Asbestos has been used in many products and building materials. When asbestos cracks or is broken up, tiny fibers can be released into the air.

### **Protect yourself from asbestos**

Asbestos can become breathable if it is broken up or crumbly. Asbestos fibers can get into your lungs when breathed. Asbestos can cause lung scarring and cancers. There is no known safe amount of asbestos that you can breathe.

### **Look for asbestos**

Look for asbestos labels. Not all asbestos has a label. Asbestos can be found in many things. Asbestos can be in glues, cement board, siding, insulation, caulk, plaster, sheetrock, roofing, vinyl and linoleum flooring and many other things.

### **Put up asbestos warning signs**

If you know a building has asbestos and it is already down, warning signs should be put up to protect people.

An asbestos removal company may have to get rid of the asbestos waste. Asbestos removal companies are licensed by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Contact MDH at: [www.health.state.mn.us/asbestos](http://www.health.state.mn.us/asbestos) or 651-201-4620 to check on a company.

### **Get help with asbestos**

If you own your own home, you can legally fix and take out asbestos from your home. This work can be dangerous to your health. It is best to get help from an asbestos company.

### **Take out asbestos before tearing down a building**

Any asbestos waste that will break into pieces should be taken out before a building is taken down. Hiring an asbestos company for this is safest. If it won't come off or if it is not removed, all the waste may have to be taken away to a special dump, called an asbestos landfill.

### **Get rid of asbestos properly**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has a list of asbestos landfills. They are the only places that can take asbestos. The MPCA can be reached at [www.pca.state.mn.us/programs/asbestos\\_p.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/programs/asbestos_p.html) or 651-296-6300.

*Note: MDH has detailed fact sheets on these topics. See back page.*



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**MDH Environmental Health Contacts:**

**Asbestos**

Asbestos and Lead Compliance: 651-201-4620

Email: [health.asbestos@state.mn.us](mailto:health.asbestos@state.mn.us)

Web Site: [www.health.state.mn.us/asbestos](http://www.health.state.mn.us/asbestos)

**Carbon Monoxide and Mold**

MDH Indoor Air Quality: 651-201-4601 or 800-798-9050

Email: [health.indoorair@state.mn.us](mailto:health.indoorair@state.mn.us)

Web Site: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/air](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/air)

**Cleaning Up and Food Safety**

MDH Food, Beverage and Lodging: 651-201-4500

Email: [health.foodlodging@state.mn.us](mailto:health.foodlodging@state.mn.us)

Web Site: [www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety](http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety)

**Drinking Water**

**Public Water**

MDH Drinking Water Protection: 651-201-4700

Email: [health.drinkingwater@state.mn.us](mailto:health.drinkingwater@state.mn.us)

Web Site: [www.health.state.mn.us/water](http://www.health.state.mn.us/water)

**Wells and Well Water**

MDH Well Management: 651-201-4600 or 1-800-383-9808

Email: [health.wells@state.mn.us](mailto:health.wells@state.mn.us)

Web Site: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells)

**MDH Environmental Health Division Emergency Program Contacts:**

[www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/contactus.htm](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/contactus.htm)

**MDH Environmental Health Flood information Web site:**

[www.health.state.mn.us/floods](http://www.health.state.mn.us/floods)

If you require this document in another format such as large print, Braille, or cassette tape, contact 651-201-5000 or 1-800-657-3908. For deaf or hard of hearing TTY: 651-201-5797



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