

Asbestos

Asbestos is a type of rock that breaks down into fibers instead of granules unlike most other rocks. Asbestos fibers have been used in items such as building materials, the automotive industry and cloth for centuries because of its strength, fire-resistance, sound proofing, and insulating properties. Although its properties are quite impressive it was discovered to be very harmful to one's health causing illnesses such as lung cancer, Asbestosis, and Mesothelioma (the risk of being diagnosed with these diseases more than doubles if you are a smoker).

In 1978 the US EPA mandated that asbestos was no longer allowed to be used in materials that were manufactured in the United States. The exception to this mandate was that manufacturers of materials that commonly used asbestos were allowed to deplete what they had in stock. Retail home-improvement/hardware stores were allowed to sell the remainder of their asbestos containing materials until their stock was also depleted. Still, despite these mandates it is possible to purchase asbestos containing materials in retail home-improvement/hardware stores today because of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which allows foreign made products to be sold in the United States. The US EPA has no jurisdiction over foreign manufacturers and the materials that are used in their products that are sold here in the USA. Only USA products are supposed to be guaranteed asbestos free products!

When materials that contain asbestos are deteriorated or disturbed in any way, it is easy to make asbestos fibers airborne (friable). Airborne asbestos fibers can cause permanent scarring to the tissue inside your lungs. If left untreated or if exposure continues the likelihood of being diagnosed with asbestosis, lung cancer, or Mesothelioma increases.

Asbestos can be found in:

- Wall texture, joint compound
- Floor tile, linoleum
- Floor and mirror mastics
- Spray applied ceiling materials
- Roofing and siding materials
- Fire proofing and boiler insulation

When planning to remodel, repair, or demolish any part of a building it is recommended that an asbestos survey be completed by EICS-a fully licensed and experienced consulting company prior to disturbance. In many cases an asbestos survey will be required by the City/County/State.