What we are doing

We have an asbestos policy in place.

We will survey a percentage of our properties each year to check for asbestos. The survey is part of the ongoing asbestos management programme which will help build up a picture of our properties. This means that any future repairs and improvements can deal with asbestos, and so reduce the risk to tenants and other people who use council buildings.

Further advice and information

Our officers can visit your home to investigate and give advice on necessary action.

As we have said before, there is no danger to your health and safety as long as you do not disturb any suspect material. It is vital that you do not saw, drill, sand or break any material suspected of containing asbestos.

If you suspect that you have found asbestos, you should report this immediately to the repairs service so that we can investigate it. In the meantime, you should make sure that the material is not disturbed.

Phone the repairs line on 0800 0196 444 (this call is free).

www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk

If you ask, we can give you a copy of this leaflet in other formats and in other languages.

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Introduction

This guide gives general advice to help you deal with any asbestos that may be in your home. You should not try to remove any material that you think may be asbestos from your home. We give advice at the end of this leaflet on what you should do if you suspect that you may have found asbestos.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral which has been used in building materials for many years worldwide. It is a good insulator and has been used extensively to protect building structures from fire and heat.

We (North Ayrshire Council) and most other Scottish local authorities own houses and other properties which may contain asbestos.

Asbestos is always mixed with other materials and can be difficult to identify. However, it is a risk to people’s health only if it is damaged or disturbed and the fibres are released into the air. As a result, it is important that you do not damage any material that contains asbestos by breaking, sawing, drilling and so on.

What was asbestos used for?

Because of its many uses, asbestos was widely used in building houses throughout Scotland. It was used in many materials and is most commonly found in the following:

- Cold-water tanks in lofts;
- Textured coatings, such as Artex. Some textured coatings contain asbestos fibres. They are normally well bonded and the fibres are not easily released into the air. In recent years only non-asbestos grades of textured coating have been used, but both versions look identical. If your house has the textured coating that contains asbestos, it can be removed only by licensed contractors.
- Boards enclosing pipework;
- Boards lining heating cupboards and their doors;
- Insulation in storage heaters and warm-air heating units;
- Flues associated with heating; ventilation and systems for getting rid of rubbish;
- Some types of ceiling and vinyl floor tiles;
- In parts of outside window screen panels, pipes and so on.

What are the risks from asbestos?

Most asbestos in the home does not generally put people at risk;
- Asbestos that is painted, covered by other materials or enclosed in ducts and so on is not a risk if it is left alone;
- All asbestos can be harmful, but it puts people at risk when it is damaged or disturbed;
- As long as asbestos is mixed and bound with other materials in good condition, sealed and not likely to be damaged or worked on, it does not give off harmful fibres and so is perfectly safe.

Do not try to remove, sand, scrape or drill a textured coating unless it has been tested and confirmed that it does not contain asbestos. Cleaning and repainting is safe as long as the surface is in good condition and is not sanded down.