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Asbestos and your home

Have you considered asbestos when planning work in your home? Houses built, or that had work done, between 1950 and 2000 are quite likely to contain asbestos.

When you are planning work

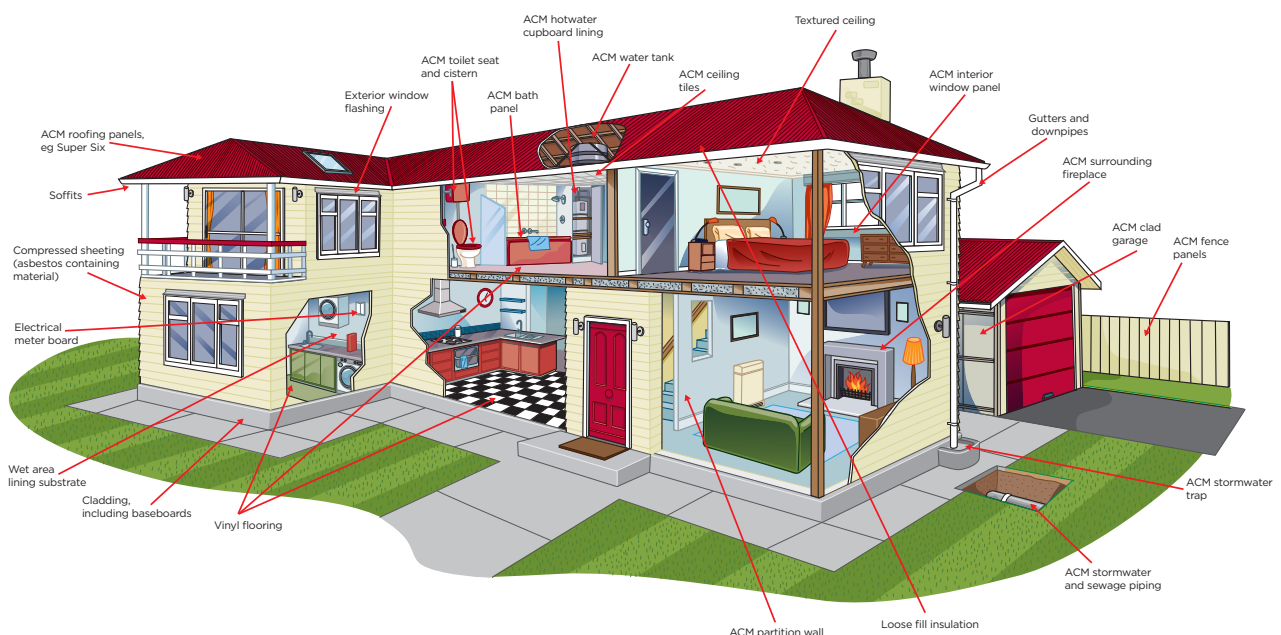
If you are doing work that requires planning permission, there's a good chance the works will require a demolition or refurbishment survey to search for asbestos.

Your contractor has a legislated requirement to ensure asbestos is identified and removed before any work that may disturb the asbestos begins in your home.

This is to protect you and your family.

Where does asbestos hide?

Asbestos-containing products can be found in lots of places, as the picture below shows. You might find it in vinyl flooring, interior and exterior wall cladding and soffits, fences, texture coatings, fireplaces, stoves, hot water cupboards, electrical switchboards, roofs, guttering and downpipes. The list goes on.



Starting work?

Your contractor should require a demolition or refurbishment survey before they commence work¹. This is an intrusive survey which may need to penetrate parts of the building. The survey should be limited to the area of work. Depending on the size of the job it might be safer if you are not living in the house when the survey is done.

If asbestos is identified, it must be removed before refurbishment work can continue. If it is only a small amount of asbestos then your contractor may be able to remove it. If the area of removal work is greater than 10 square metres it must be done by a licenced removal company. A licenced company has the skills and training to keep your family safe.

Once the removal work is done, you should receive a clearance certificate that verifies the area is safe. Your contractor must ensure this is carried out by an independent third party.

Do not re-occupy the area where asbestos was removed if you have not been given a certificate, without a certificate, as this is your peace of mind, proving it is safe.

What if I am doing the work?

The regulations only apply if you are a PCBU, for example, a business. If you are completing DIY work at home, there is no requirement to do a survey, but you could expose you and your family to airborne asbestos fibres. Our advice is to have a competent person check what you're working on and if necessary get a sample analysed before you start work.

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¹ This is required if the property was built prior to 1 January 2000, or where asbestos has previously been identified.