

## Customer information sheet

### Removal of asbestos from buildings prior to demolition

[For guidance on the demolition process](#)

Asbestos was used extensively as a building material in England and Wales from the 1950's through to the mid 1980's. Although some of this material has been removed over the years, there are many thousands of tonnes of asbestos still present in buildings. Over half a million non-domestic premises currently are thought to have some form of asbestos in them. It is estimated that asbestos related diseases still account for 4000 deaths per annum.

You are most likely to come across asbestos in the following materials:

- Sprayed asbestos and asbestos loose packing—generally used as fire breaks in ceiling voids
- Moulded or preformed lagging—generally used in thermal insulation of pipes and boilers
- Sprayed asbestos—generally used as fire protection in ducts
- Fire breaks, panels, partitions, soffit boards, ceiling panels and around structural steelwork
- Asbestos insulating board (AIB) used for fire protection, thermal insulation, partitioning and ducts
- Miscellaneous use of AIB offcuts as spacers and packing (this use is often not recorded)
- Some ceiling tiles
- Millboard, paper and paper products used for insulation of electrical equipment. Asbestos paper has also been used as a fireproof facing on wood fibreboard
- Asbestos cement products, including gutters, rainwater pipes, water tanks and corrugated sheets, largely used as roofing and wall cladding
- Certain textured coatings
- Bitumen roofing material
- Vinyl or thermoplastic floor tiles

Due to its widespread use, asbestos is liable to be present in any pre-2000 buildings, so you cannot assume such buildings are free from it.

There is a legal requirement to remove most asbestos containing materials (ACMs) from buildings before demolition and you should ensure that this is done, where reasonably practicable. There may be some circumstances where the risks involved in the removal of ACMs out-weigh the residual risks of leaving them in situ. For example this could apply to textured coatings or floor tiles.

You must have full information on the presence (or not) of ACMs before demolition of a building. This will require an asbestos survey. The client must ensure that the surveyor is given full access to all areas.

Information from the survey about ACMs must be made available to potential contractors and any others who may disturb and be exposed to asbestos as a result of the demolition work.

Asbestos cement sheet and textured coating (artex) materials may be removed by non-licensed contractors, but should be done in [accordance with the guidance](#). Most other asbestos materials must be removed by a contractor licensed by the Health and Safety Executive.

If at any stage during the demolition process asbestos is suspected, the work should stop immediately and the material should be investigated.