

Asbestos, Vermiculite, and Lead

New York State licensed home inspectors follow a mandated Standard of Practice. These SOP's cover a wide range items and subject matter. But there are topics that require special licensing. An example would be lead and Asbestos. While not covered by our SOP's, we still have an obligation to inform our clients if we suspect a potential issue. We feel that our responsibility to our clients is a trust and that, to the best of our ability and given the circumstances we should inform our client of any misgivings we may have. Just remember these important words: "The pipes have what appears to be an Asbestos like insulation around them. Recommend that you have a qualified licensed Asbestos inspection performed to determine if mitigation may be needed." Or "In homes built about 1978 or before, there is a possibility that lead based paints were used. If you choose to have it removed, you may need to have a qualified and licensed mitigation contractor perform the work. Recommend that you consult with the qualified contractor for further evaluation."

Below are excerpts from various sources. This is a sensitive topic, and our goal is not to make mountains out of molehills. Instead our goal is to give you a taste of how complicated it may be and that buying an older home that may need renovation may also have to include a review by a licensed and qualified specialist. Consider all the facts, consider all the sources of information, and make the best decision you can.

Where to Look for Asbestos :

- steam pipes, boilers and furnace ducts insulated with an asbestos blanket or asbestos paper tape.
- resilient floor tiles (vinyl asbestos, asphalt, and rubber), the backing on vinyl sheet flooring, and adhesives used for installing floor
- cement sheet, millboard and paper used as insulation around furnaces and wood-burning stoves.
- door gaskets in furnaces, wood stoves and coal stoves.
- soundproofing or decorative material sprayed on walls and ceilings.
- patching and joint compounds for walls and ceilings, and textured paints.
- asbestos cement roofing, shingles, and siding.

What is the AGE of the Flooring? In North America if asphalt or vinyl floor tiles or sheet flooring were made or installed before 1986, treat the floor as presumed to contain asbestos.

What is the General Floor Tile Pattern and Size: Asphalt Asbestos, Plastic Asbestos, and Vinyl Asbestos floor tiles were sold in 6"x6", 9" x 9" and in some years 12" x 12" sizes.

Lab testing of flooring for asbestos content: if you face a costly dusty messy demolition it may be appropriate to have a sample of the flooring tested.

Vermiculite Insulation

Vermiculite insulation is a pebble-like or rectangular, chunky product about the size of a pencil eraser, be careful, you are not licensed to say this is vermiculite. You say it may be. While it may be hazardous, if left alone it is the fibers are not released into the air. General recommendations are that if it is in an area that is not inhabited, and it is not disturbed then leave it alone. If you need to remove it, then a qualified and licensed Asbestos mitigation contractor should be consulted.



Lead can be found:

- in the soil around a home
- in household dust
- in drinking water.
- plumbing might have lead in it:
- in old (vintage or antique) painted toys and furniture.
- in food and liquids stored in lead crystal, lead-glazed pottery, and porcelain.
- with hobbies that use lead, such as making pottery or stained glass, or refinishing furniture.
- in folk remedies that contain lead, such as "Greta" and "Azarcon" used to treat an upset stomach.
- Lead from chips, Peeling, chalking and cracking lead-based
- Lead-based paint may also be a hazard when found on surfaces that children can chew or that get a lot of wear-and-tear. These areas include:
 - windows and windowsills.
 - doors and door frames.
 - stairs, railings, and banisters; and
 - porches and fences.



Sources:

<https://www.nachi.org/asbestos.htm>

<http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/factsheets/vermiculite.htm>

<https://www.nachi.org/lead-consumer.htm>

<https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>

<https://www.epa.gov/lead>

https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/renovation_repair_painting/index.htm

www.nachi.org/vermiculite.htm