

Asbestos Overview

Asbestos is the name of a group of highly fibrous minerals with separable, long and thin fibers. Asbestos fibers are strong and flexible enough to be spun and woven. Asbestos fibers are heat and chemical resistant, making them useful for many industrial purposes.

The term asbestos typically is used to describe six regulated, naturally occurring fibrous silicate minerals: Chrysotile, Amosite, Crocidolite, Anthophyllite, Tremolite and Actinolite. When disturbed, asbestos has the potential to release fibers into the air where they can become an inhalation hazard. These fibers, so small that they are typically invisible to the naked eye, can remain airborne for extended periods of time.

Asbestos has been used commonly in a variety of building construction materials for insulation and as a fire-retardant. Since asbestos fibers are resistant to heat and most chemicals, they have been mined for use in over 3,000 different products including roofing materials, brake pads and cement pipe often used in distributing water to communities. Today, asbestos is most commonly found in older homes, in pipe and furnace insulation materials, asbestos shingles, millboard, textured paints and other coating materials as well as floor tiles.

Elevated concentrations of airborne asbestos can occur after asbestos-containing materials are disturbed by cutting, sanding or other remodeling activities. Asbestos can be positively identified only by a trained analyst using specialized microscopes. Access Home Inspections can test samples of suspected asbestos to find out if you home and family are in danger.

Lead Overview

Lead is a naturally occurring soft and heavy metal. Over the years lead has been mined and used in many products that were found in and around our homes and buildings. Exposure to lead should be avoided since it is highly toxic to humans, especially young children.

Lead Used by humans can be trace back as far as 7000 years and was used for many purposes, including the creation of plumbing pipes by the ancient Romans. Lead in many household products has been banned or its use limited in many parts of the world over the last several decades. Despite these laws there are millions of homes and buildings across the nation that were constructed prior to these regulations.

The risk associated with lead comes from occupants inhaling, ingesting or drinking lead contaminated materials. In some circumstances if the lead has not been aerosolized, and is not chipping or flaking, there may be minimal risk to people. It is when lead containing products are disturbed or begin to decay that they typically pose the greatest risk to health.

Lead is typically impossible for occupants and building owners to detect using normal senses. Affordable testing procedures are available by qualified professionals and accredited laboratories to determine if lead is present. Access Home Inspections can test samples of suspected lead to find out if you home and family are in danger.