

Asbestos Information

Homeowners need to be aware that houses built before the mid-1980s may contain asbestos materials. These materials include drywall mud, ceiling tiles, insulation and floor tiles. Remember that in many older homes, materials may have been replaced over the years through renovations and may be newer than the mid-1980s. New materials are not likely to contain asbestos.

Identifying Asbestos

The safest way to identify and remove asbestos materials is to hire an environmental consultant to assess the property, and have a qualified contractor remove any asbestos materials.

Qualified contractors wear specialized personal protective equipment and have expert knowledge and techniques to avoid asbestos exposure.

Protecting Yourself

If you decide to remove flood-damaged materials yourself, there are actions you can take to lessen the risk of asbestos exposure.

- Health risks are greatest when asbestos particles are inhaled. Avoid breaking materials that may contain asbestos. Do not use power tools or any abrasive materials (e.g. sanders) on asbestos materials.
- Keep materials wet. Dry materials are more likely to emit particles into the air.
- Immediately bag the materials in a thick plastic bag, and ensure the bag is sealed.

If you are concerned you may have disturbed asbestos containing materials already, you can lessen the risk by:

- Immediately wetting down the materials and carefully placing them into sealed plastic bags.
- Cleaning all home surfaces by wet-wiping with a cloth or using a vacuum with a HEPA filter.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment available to the general public does not completely protect against asbestos, but MAY lessen the risk of exposure.

Equipment includes:

- A half-mask air purifying respirator with a P100 (oil proof), R100 (oil resistant), or N100 (not oil resistant). Follow manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Disposable protective clothing including coveralls, booties and gloves. Remove the disposable protective clothing after exiting the home and dispose of in the same manner as asbestos material.

All homeowners cleaning up flood-affected properties should change into clean clothing when leaving the property or area. Bag soiled clothing until it can be washed, regardless of whether asbestos may be present or not. Shower as soon as possible.

The Alberta Asbestos Abatement Manual contains information about asbestos and its removal and can be found here: <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/Asbestos-Abatement-Manual.pdf>.

Read Service Alberta's tips on [hiring a contractor](#) to help repair or rebuild your home.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

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