



Below is a guide only to asbestos products used in the construction of homes, it should be noted that Housing Industry Building Consultants t/a Affordable Building Inspections are not specialised in either asbestos, asbestos identification or testers of air quality and the information below is a guide only. Each person should make their own enquires from companies that specialise in asbestos if they require a detailed inspection of a property or require general advice regarding asbestos or asbestos product including safety removal of asbestos, handling of asbestos or for health advice.

Friable asbestos products have been commonly used in commercial and industrial settings since the late 1800s for fireproofing, soundproofing and insulation. Some friable products were also used in houses and may still be found in houses built before 1990.

In Australia, asbestos cement materials were first manufactured in the 1920s and were commonly used in the manufacture of residential building materials from the mid-1940s until the late 1980s. During the 1980s asbestos cement materials were phased out in favour of asbestos-free products. From 31 December 2003, the total ban on manufacture, use, reuse, import, transport, storage or sale of all forms of asbestos came into force.

Many houses built before 1990 therefore contain asbestos cement materials, especially in the eaves, internal and external wall cladding, ceilings (particularly in wet areas such as bathrooms and laundries) and fences.

As a general rule, if your house was built:

- Before the mid-1980s it is highly likely that it has asbestos-containing products
- Between the mid-1980s and 1990 it is likely that it has asbestos containing products
- After 1990 it is unlikely that it has asbestos-containing products.

Some houses built in the 1990s and early 2000s may have still used asbestos cement materials until the total ban on any activity involving asbestos products became effective from December 2003.

The vast majority of asbestos-containing products used in houses were bonded asbestos cement materials, including

- Roofing.
- Shingles and siding (Villaboard and similar).
- Exterior and interior wall cladding.
- Eave and roof gable linings.
- Fencing.
- Thermal boards around fireplaces.
- Water or flue pipes.

Some friable asbestos products may also be found in houses, including:

- Loose fill roofing insulation (not common).
- Spray-on insulation or soundproofing.
- Low-density asbestos fibre board.
- Insulation on hot-water pipes, domestic heaters and stoves (e.g. lagging).
- Backing material on floor tiles and vinyl flooring.
- Carpet underlay (not common).
- Heat-resistant fabrics.
- Brick and plaster sealants, fillers and some adhesive products.
- Asbestos-rope door gaskets in wood stoves.

Where asbestos may be found in a typical home.

Exterior

- Flat, patterned and corrugated wall cladding, roof sheeting including shingles, roof guttering, ridge capping, imitation brick cladding and lining under eaves, flue and cowls.

Bathroom, toilet and laundry

- Asbestos cement sheet walls, ceilings and floors, backing to wall tiles

Living areas

- Insulation in wood heaters, asbestos cement sheeting in walls, ceilings and beneath wood-heater hearths.

Kitchen

- Walls, splashbacks, ceilings, in vinyl floor tiles, backing of vinyl sheet flooring, underlay sheeting for ceramic tiles.

Roof cavity

- Loose fill insulation (not common).

Backyard

- Fences, garden sheds, garages, outside toilets, carports and dog kennels.
- Buried and dumped waste materials.

Other

- Backing of electrical meter boards, some plaster sealants, fillers and adhesive products, and hot-water pipe insulation set into masonry walls.
- Low-density asbestos fibreboard wall and ceiling panels (especially in high-humidity areas).

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