

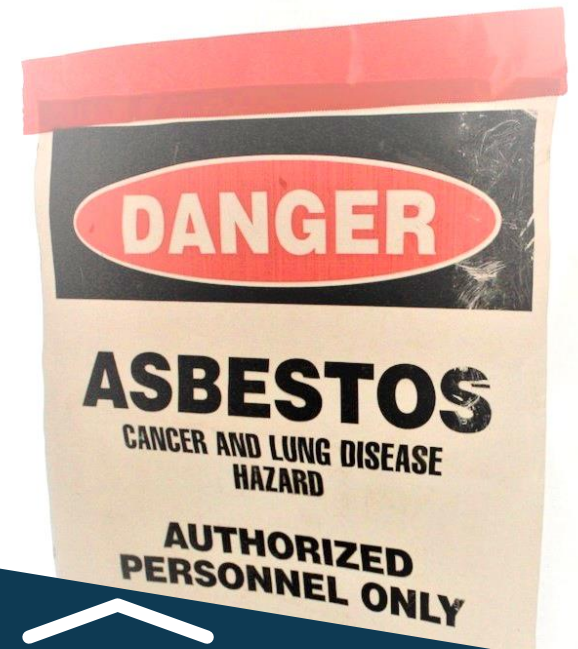
# Asbestos Safety Information

City of Kitchener  
Building Division



## What is Asbestos?

Asbestos refers to a group of naturally occurring minerals once used widely in many building construction materials. Chrysotile is the most common form of asbestos found in Ontario. It was used in a number of construction materials due to its tensile strength, poor heat conduction and versatility. The material, can be present in structures built prior to the 1990's. It is currently in very limited use.



## Where was it used?

If you are renovating or demolishing a home built before 1990, it's likely that at least some parts of the home will contain asbestos. Asbestos is only harmful when materials containing asbestos are disturbed.

It's hard to know for sure where asbestos could be because it's often mixed with other materials

Some examples include:

- Vinyl tiles and linoleum sheet flooring
- Roof felt and shingles
- Loose, blown-in insulation, such as vermiculite
- Stucco
- Gypsum board filling compound, and patching and joint compound for walls and ceilings
- Incandescent light fixture backing
- Pipe wrap, duct wrap

## Why is it dangerous?

All forms of asbestos are classified as carcinogens to humans. When asbestos-containing materials are disturbed, intentionally or unintentionally, asbestos fibres can be released into the air; and exposure to harmful airborne asbestos can cause serious health concerns for anyone working or living on your property. Breathing in asbestos fibres can cause serious health problems, lung diseases, and cancer.



## What can you do?

Before work starts on any structure built in 1990 or earlier, it's important to identify any asbestos in your home/project and have it properly removed, for the health and safety of everyone working on your project and occupants in the building.

The safe removal and disposal of asbestos is a shared responsibility, and contractors/homeowners have a role to play.

There are two main steps you need to take to ensure the health and safety of everyone working on your project: identify asbestos-containing materials in your home, safely remove any asbestos in your home.

Specific requirements for safety exist for asbestos removal. Hire a professional contractor or consultant familiar with asbestos removal. When hiring, confirm that they are qualified and have insurance that covers the type of asbestos work they will be completing. The person you hire should discuss the specific steps that must be taken to prepare the work area to make sure that:

- Dust is controlled.
- Personal protective clothing and equipment is used.
- There is appropriate clean-up of the work area and waste removal.



## Safety Expectations

The City of Kitchener places a high level of importance on the safety of our inspectors. As with all employers, the City of Kitchener is obligated through workplace legislation, where reasonable in the circumstances, to protect our workers from injury or illness in the workplace. When our inspectors visit your project, this becomes their workplace. Any information you have regarding the presence of asbestos on your project must be shared at the time of permit application and inspection. If asbestos is or is likely to be present, inspectors will expect any work that could disturb asbestos to be suspended 24 hours prior to their inspection and that dusts generated from the work are adequately controlled.



## Who Can Help

The Occupational Hygiene Association of Ontario provides a listing of consultants qualified in asbestos consulting.

This listing can be found on their website [here](#).



## Where can I find out more

[Government of Canada – Health Canada](#)

[Ministry of Labour](#)