

Homeowners Should Be Aware of Asbestos Hazards

As a new homeowner or potential seller, it is not likely that you are acquainted with the inner materials of a home. However, most buyers seek an updated home inspection before closing on a new property. It is important to reassure buyers that the home is safe and does not contain any potential health hazards. These inspections are critical to clearing hurdles down the road that may slow the sale of property.

One of the most common surprises new homeowners and sellers confront is asbestos in older structures. Indeed, asbestos containing materials (ACMs) are now banned for use in the United States but many older buildings still contain these products, which are generally safe, but homeowners should be aware of where they are and when they become hazardous.

Asbestos was included in thousands of construction products and still exists in nearly 80% of homes built prior to 1978. Common asbestos materials include attic insulation, ceiling tiles, and pipe lining. Asbestos was particularly adept at insulation and prevention of temperature transfer and was used extensively until adverse health effects began to manifest in those who worked with the material frequently.

It is only when asbestos containing materials are compromised or very old that they become hazardous. Asbestos products under these conditions are rendered "friable." Home inspection companies should be able to identify these circumstances and advise you on a course of action. When asbestos material is friable, asbestos fibers can be released into the air, potentially endangering those in the area.

Inhaled asbestos fibers lodge in the body's inner tissue and have been conclusively linked to the rare cancer, [mesothelioma](#), commonly referred to as [asbestos cancer](#), in addition to many other respiratory disorders. There are few options for mesothelioma treatment or curative therapies for other conditions caused by sustained asbestos exposures. Homeowners need to be aware of potential hazards that may exist so they may be able to avoid potentially harmful effects of hazardous asbestos.

Again, most asbestos containing materials will not pose an immediate hazard and an informed buyer will not be turned off by their presence if they're reassured of their safety by a professional opinion. These simple precautions can be taken to assure that both sides know that they and their families will be happy and healthy in their new home.

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