



DO I HAVE
ASBESTOS IN MY
HOME?

Do any of your pipes in your home look like these?



If you have moderately damaged insulation around pipes or boilers, the best current recommendation is to leave the insulation in place and have the protective covering repaired by a licensed professional. If the heating unit or pipe insulation is in poor condition, or pieces are breaking off or it has been subject to water damage, you should have it repaired or removed entirely. You should first find out if the insulation actually contains asbestos by sampling and analysis. While the insulation is in poor condition and awaiting repair or removal, children should be prevented from playing in or near the space to protect them and prevent further insulation damage.

Steam and hot water pipes were insulated with asbestos-containing material, particularly at elbows, tees, and valves. Its appearance is similar to that found on boilers. Pipes may also be wrapped in an asbestos "blanket", or asbestos paper (which looks very much like corrugated cardboard). Asbestos-containing insulation has also been used on and inside round and rectangular furnace ducts. Sometimes the duct itself may be made of asbestos-containing materials.

or Does your boiler look like any of these?



Boiler Wall coat/blanket is a "paint" that was used on the exterior walls of boilers. It contains asbestos for its insulating properties and its resistance to high temperatures. Snowman boilers look like a snowman, with puffy looking white concrete type stuff around a central tank, this is asbestos. The insulation material is gray or white. It resembles the plaster doctor's use in casts to protect broken bones. Other parts of the heating system that could contain asbestos are door gaskets, duct insulation, and tape at duct connections.

This insulation was used as the best material available, during its time, as high-temperature insulation. Oil, coal, gas, or wood furnaces with asbestos-containing insulation and cement are generally found in older homes, its installation dating between 1930 and 1972. They were called "snowmen," because that's what they looked like all covered with asbestos. It was said that the snowman boiler was more efficient and heating water and homes faster. If your house has an old 'snowman' type boiler, it's is definitively worthwhile replacing it. These snowmen boilers were originally used to burn coal. Many homeowners converted their coal burning boilers over to oil or gas burning boilers.

It is likely that millions of homes in the United States are contaminated with asbestos. This terrible culprit is your boiler insulation. Asbestos has been installed in countless homes in the United States and abroad to insulate boilers.

While asbestos was effective in this application, it is also *extremely unsafe*. Generally, this asbestos boiler insulation will not harm your family as long as it remained sealed beneath a layer of canvas and a special coating agent. However, if the canvas wears down or is broken by an impact, millions of tiny asbestos fibers and particles can be released into the atmosphere. When such an event takes place, your home is no longer safe. These asbestos particles from your boiler insulation can be aspirated, in which case they can cause serious, irreparable damage to your family. The asbestos fibers that would cause health problems are much too small to be seen without a powerful microscope. In fact, an average human hair is approximately 1200 times thicker than an asbestos fiber.

Port Oil offers and installs several types of energy efficient boilers and furnaces. Call Port Oil to discuss removal options or boiler/furnace replacement.

ACCORDING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA):

Asbestos DO'S and DO NOTS for the Homeowner:

- Do keep activities to a minimum in any areas having damaged material that may contain asbestos.
- Do take every precaution to avoid damaging asbestos material.
- Do have removal and major repair done by people trained and qualified in handling asbestos. It is highly recommended that sampling and minor repair also be done by asbestos professionals.
- Do not dust, sweep, or vacuum debris that may contain asbestos.
- Do not saw, sand, scrape, or drill holes in asbestos materials.
- Do not use abrasive pads or brushes on power strippers to strip wax from asbestos flooring. Never use a power stripper on a dry floor.
- Do not sand or try to level asbestos flooring or its backing. When asbestos flooring needs replacing, install new floor covering over it, if possible.
- Do not track material that could contain asbestos through the house. If you cannot avoid walking through the area, have it cleaned with a wet mop. If the material is from a damaged area, or if a large area must be cleaned, call an asbestos professional.
- Do not dust, sweep, or vacuum debris that may contain asbestos. These steps will disturb tiny asbestos fibers and may release them into the air. Remove dust by wet mopping or with a special HEPA vacuum cleaner used by trained asbestos contractors.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring, mostly fibrous mineral and may consist of any one of a number of silicates. Asbestos is used in a variety of products because of its physical properties, which make it resistant to heat, fire, and many caustic chemicals. Asbestos has been used extensively as fireproofing, an insulating agent, and for decorative purposes, among many other uses.

The physical properties that give asbestos its resistance to heat and decay are linked with several adverse human effects. Asbestos tends to break into a dust of microscopic fibers. Because of their size and shape, these tiny fibers can remain suspended in the air for long periods of time and can easily penetrate bodily tissue when inhaled. Because of their durability, these fibers can remain in the body for many years.

Asbestos is known to cause asbestosis and various forms of cancer. *Asbestosis* is a chronic disease of the lungs which makes breathing progressively more difficult, and can lead to death. Cancer can result from breathing asbestos fibers and *lung cancer* is the most frequent. *Mesothelioma*, an incurable cancer of the chest and abdominal membranes, almost never occurs without exposure to asbestos. Some other diseases, caused by asbestos, include asbestosis, lung cancer, stomach and colon cancer. Asbestos related diseases have a long latency period and do not show up until 10 to 40 years after initial exposure. Each exposure increases the likelihood of developing an asbestos-related disease in the future.

Many of the older homes have steam pipes, boilers and furnace ducts insulated with an asbestos blanket or asbestos paper tape.

Massachusetts Department of Safety (DOS) strongly recommends that only a DOS certified technician do asbestos handling on behalf of homeowners. Asbestos fibers pose a serious health threat. There are EPA requirements for anyone handling asbestos, including special supplies and equipment, specific work practices including setting up a containment area, air filtration equipment, packaging and labeling of waste. If the area is contaminated by improper handling of asbestos, cleanup procedures specific to the job are required.

For public's protection, DOS requires that any anyone engaged in the business of asbestos abatement or containment *must* be licensed and certified. All repairs, when asbestos is present, should be done by licensed professionals since there is always a risk of exposure to fibers when the asbestos is disturbed. Repairs done without a DOS certified technician could create and become a hazard where previous hazard existed.

All asbestos removal professionals a required by law to wear special uniforms to remove asbestos. (see pictures below) Asbestos *must* be disposed of in approved, hazardous waste areas. It also must be transported in approved containers. Improper disposal or transport of asbestos materials will incur heavy fines and/or imprisonment.

Waste asbestos containing material (asbestos waste) is basically divided into three categories: friable, non-friable, and Presumed Asbestos Containing Material (PACM):

- Friable means any material containing more than one percent asbestos that, when dry, can be crumbled, pulverized, or reduced to powder by hand pressure.
- Non-friable means any material containing more than one percent asbestos that, when dry, cannot be crumbled, pulverized, or reduce to powder by hand pressure.
- PACM is defined as thermal system insulation and surfacing material found in a buildings constructed prior to 1980. Thermal system insulation is the material applied to pipes, boilers, tanks, ducts or other structural components, generally to prevent heat loss or gain. Surfacing material refers to materials sprayed, troweled on or otherwise applied to surfaces generally for acoustical, fireproofing, or other purposes.



Port Oil recommends using **Dudley Services Inc.** for all types of asbestos removal. Their contact information is: Phone: 781-643-4328, email: dudleyservices@gmail.com butch@dudleyasbestos.com or visit their website at: www.dudleyasbestos.com Dudley Asbestos is a licensed & insured residential asbestos removal company serving the greater Boston area for over 20 years.