

Asbestos hazards in demolition, renovation, and salvage

Asbestos causes more worker deaths than any other workplace disease — what can you do?

Asbestos is extremely hazardous to people's health. Demolishing or renovating homes containing asbestos products can release asbestos fibres, which are very fine and can stay in the air for hours.

Unprotected workers exposed to asbestos-contaminated air can breathe in the fibres. This may cause serious health problems, such as lung disease and cancer.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a strong, fire-resistant mineral fibre. In the past, asbestos was used as insulation against heat or noise, and for fire protection. It was also added to materials such as cement and plaster to give them more structural strength.

Where was asbestos used in homes?

More than 3,000 products containing asbestos were used in residential construction in B.C. and can still be found in many buildings today.

The drawing on the back of this page shows potential sources of asbestos once commonly used in residential construction. When demolishing or renovating older homes, there is a high probability of disturbing asbestos-containing materials, which may release asbestos fibres and put unprotected workers at risk.

What are my responsibilities as an employer, owner, or builder?

You are responsible for:

- Ensuring that asbestos licensing and certification requirements are met
- Ensuring the health and safety of all workers present at your workplace
- Protecting the public from any asbestos-contaminated air

When doing any demolition, renovation, or salvage work, you must follow the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, specifically Part 20 (Demolition) and Part 6 (Asbestos).

What do I have to do before demolishing, renovating, or salvaging buildings or structures?

1. You must have a certified surveyor inspect the site to identify any asbestos that may be handled, disturbed, or removed.
2. You must submit to WorkSafeBC a Notice of Project (NOP) form for asbestos at least 48 hours before any asbestos removal or other work begins.
3. You must have certified and qualified asbestos abatement workers properly contain or remove and dispose of all material containing asbestos.

You should receive written confirmation that the asbestos specified for removal on the Notice of Project form has been properly removed.

For more information, refer to [OHS Guideline G20.112](#), which explains the hazards associated with the uncontrolled release of asbestos. It also provides information on:

- Asbestos licensing and certification requirements
- What constitutes a compliant asbestos inspection
- Arranging for and confirming the safe removal of asbestos
- What to do if you encounter more materials suspected to contain asbestos during demolition or salvage work

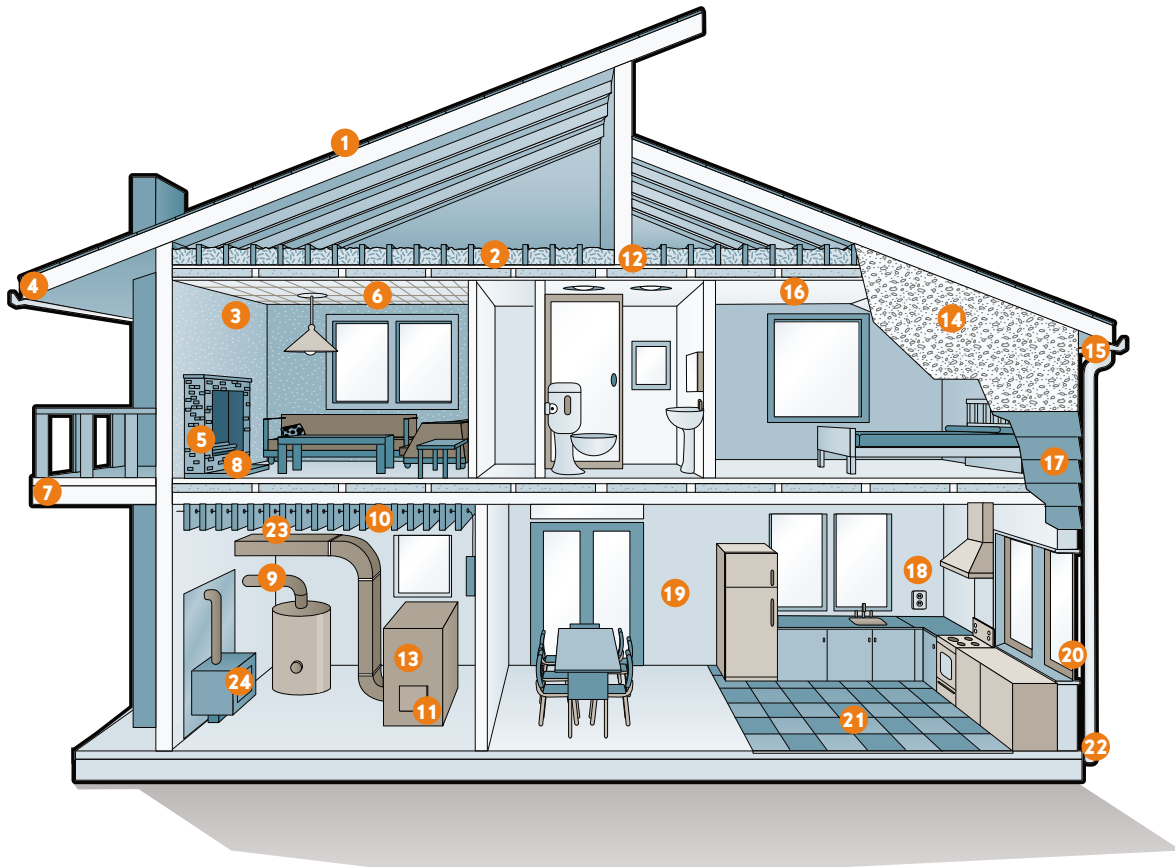
What should I do if I find more asbestos-containing material once demolition or salvage work has started?

Stop work immediately. Have certified and qualified asbestos abatement workers properly remove these materials before resuming work.

Where can I find more information about Notice of Project forms and asbestos contractors?

Find a registry of licensed asbestos abatement contractors and submit an NOP form at [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

Potential sources of asbestos in the home



- 1 Roof felt and shingles
- 2 Loose, blown-in insulation, such as vermiculite
- 3 Incandescent light fixture backing
- 4 Roof gutters can be made of asbestos cement
- 5 Artificial fireplace logs and ashes
- 6 Acoustic tiles
- 7 Deck undersheeting
- 8 Asbestos pad under the fireplace hearth
- 9 Pipe insulation
- 10 Main panel and fuse box; each fuse wire has an individual asbestos flash guard
- 11 Door and gasket covers
- 12 Backing behind recessed lighting
- 13 Boiler and furnace insulation
- 14 Asbestos can be found in stucco
- 15 Soffit boards can be made of asbestos cement or asbestos insulating board
- 16 Textured or stipple-coated walls and ceilings
- 17 Asbestos cement (transite) board siding and undersheeting
- 18 Outlets and switches
- 19 Gypsum board filling compound, and patching and joint compound for walls and ceilings
- 20 Window putty
- 21 Flooring: vinyl tiles and linoleum sheet flooring; flooring adhesive
- 22 Downpipes can be made of asbestos cement
- 23 Insulation on electrical wires
- 24 Heat reflector for wood stove