

Asbestos Hazards in Flood Damaged Homes

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Asbestos was used in more than 3,000 different construction materials and manufactured products. Asbestos products were common in many building materials installed in homes and businesses as part of new construction or remodeling through the early 1980's; some asbestos-containing building materials may still be manufactured today.

Renovation and demolition projects involving individual residential homes are not regulated by the DENR. However, if you suspect damaged building materials might contain asbestos, the DENR recommends you not further disturb the material until it can be determined if it is asbestos containing or not. Identifying and removal of asbestos-containing material should be performed by trained and certified individuals. A list of asbestos services in South Dakota may be found at <http://denr.sd.gov/des/wm/asb/Documents/AsbestosServices.pdf>.

If you elect to remove or disturb asbestos-containing materials from your home we recommend you obtain and review materials on handling asbestos. Some of these materials are located at <http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/ashome.html>. Proper precautions should be taken to minimize any potential exposure when suspect asbestos-containing materials are disturbed.

- Avoid spreading or tracking asbestos dust into other areas of your home. Seal the work area from the rest of the house using plastic sheeting and duct tape, and also turn off the heating and air conditioning system. For some repairs, such as pipe insulation removal, plastic glove bags may be adequate. They must be sealed with tape and properly disposed of when the job is complete.
- Always wear an approved respirator and disposable protective clothing. Decontaminate yourself before going into uncontaminated areas.
- Apply water to the asbestos material with a hand sprayer that creates a fine mist before removal. Wet fibers do not float in the air as easily as dry fibers and will be easier to clean up.
- Avoid breaking the material into smaller pieces. While smaller pieces may be easier to handle, this will increase the possibility of asbestos emissions.
- Upon completion, clean the area well with wet mops, wet rags, sponges, or HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) vacuum cleaners. A regular vacuum cleaner must never be used. All asbestos materials and disposable equipment and clothing used in the job must be placed in sealed, leak-proof, and labeled plastic bags. The work site should be visually free of dust and debris.
- Transport the asbestos waste material to an approved disposal facility in an enclosed dumpster or truck lined with plastic sheeting.

Caution! 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.

For further assistance, please contact the DENR Waste Management Program-Asbestos Coordinator, 605-773-3153.