

THINK TWICE ABOUT ASBESTOS

**ASBESTOS
AWARENESS**
WEEK
November 22-28 2021

Asbestos facts

- An estimated 4,000 Australians die annually from asbestos-related diseases. This is more than triple the annual road toll.
- Approximately 700 people die annually from the aggressive cancer mesothelioma which is caused by exposure to asbestos.
- Asbestos was used in over 3,000 products before 1990 — many of these were in residential construction and fit out.
- Asbestos was completely banned in Australia in 2003 (December 31, 2003).
- An estimated 6,000 tonnes of asbestos are illegally dumped every year.
- The World Health Organization says there is no known safe minimum level of exposure to asbestos.
- You cannot see asbestos fibres — they are invisible to the naked eye.

**Houses built before
1990 can contain asbestos.**

Asbestos in DIY

- 57% of Australians are 'DIYers'. These are people who do, or would, undertake at least part of a renovation or maintenance project by themselves.
- 40% of DIYers have worked on a risky property (built before 1990).
- At least a third of projects started in the last 5 years began during early COVID-19 pandemic restrictions (the four months from March to June 2020).
- Almost no DIYers (only 5%) named asbestos as a high-risk consideration in DIY, without being prompted. This compares to 22% for electrical work.
- 1 in 5 DIYers encountered asbestos in a previous project. Only half sought professional help to deal with it.
- Most DIYers felt it was important to know how to manage asbestos risks, but only half felt confident identifying or managing asbestos.

Over a third of those who have encountered asbestos admitted to illegal and dangerous disposal — mostly in their own or a neighbour's household bin.



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Where can you find asbestos in your home?

These locations are examples of where asbestos can be, in homes built before 1990.

Inside the home

- wall and ceiling panels, particularly in wet areas such as the kitchen, bathroom, toilet and laundry
- vinyl floor tiles
- backing for vinyl and linoleum flooring
- backing for wall tiles and splashbacks
- carpet underlay
- insulation in domestic heaters and stoves
- backing of electrical switchboards
- insulation in roof cavities
- hot water pipe insulation
- in textured paint and plaster patching compounds.

Outside the home

- roof sheeting and ridge capping
- gutters and downpipes
- imitation brick cladding
- lining under eaves
- fences, garden sheds, garages, carports, outdoor toilets and dog kennels
- buried and dumped waste materials.

Asbestos is dangerous if damaged, disturbed or deteriorating. Know the risks and protect yourself during work or renovations.

