

Homeowners FAQ for Addressing Asbestos During Renovations/Demolitions

What are my requirements as a Homeowner?

A homeowner is not required by air quality regulations to identify and test suspicious asbestos-containing building materials before conducting a renovation or demolition of their own home. However, MCAQ strongly recommends this action be taken. Failure to properly identify and remove asbestos materials in a safe manner may put you and your family at risk for exposure to asbestos fibers, particularly if you are completing an interior renovation, and your family will continue to reside in the home once it is complete. Asbestos building materials should be kept thoroughly wet before, during, and after the work is completed to minimize risk.

Note: Although Air Quality Regulations may not apply, you should still consult with Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement (980-314-CODE) before starting a renovation or demolition to determine whether building permits may be necessary.

How do I know if a building material contains asbestos?

As asbestos is microscopic and odorless, the only way to know for certain whether a specific building material contains it is to have a sample of the material analyzed by a lab. Building materials that are often found to have asbestos include:

- floor tile
- the backing on sheet linoleum and sheet vinyl floor covering
- mastic or glue under floor tile/linoleum
- textured ceilings/walls
- ceiling tiles and panels
- drywall joint compound
- plaster coating
- roof flashing and felt
- shingles
- roof tar
- cement asbestos siding (transite)
- pipe and surface insulation
- door/window caulk and glazing

It should be noted that while suspect for asbestos, flooring, roofing, and siding materials (which are commonly disturbed in renovation and/or demolition activities) are typically considered non-friable in that the material is not crumbly and generally the fibers are not made airborne. If handled properly (i.e. thoroughly wetted), these are less of a concern than friable materials.

How do I find a lab that is qualified to analyze my suspected material?

MCAQ recommends using a lab that is accredited by the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) to analyze samples using Phase Light Microscopy (PLM). You can locate an accredited lab here: <https://www-s.nist.gov/niws/index.cfm>.

Can I take the sample myself?

If you plan on doing your own home renovation, then you can take a sample yourself. However, it is strongly recommended that you hire an Accredited Asbestos Inspector who has been issued a license by the North Carolina Department of Health Hazards Control Asbestos Management Division (NCDHHC). An accredited inspector has been trained to identify asbestos-containing materials and collect samples of various materials so that a lab will be able to identify any asbestos fibers.

How do I know if a contractor is accredited?

NCDHHC issues a photo ID to accredited asbestos Workers, Inspectors, Roofers, Supervisors, and Air Monitors. You can also search for the individual by name using the NCDHHC webpage: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/asbestos/accredited.cfm>. If you are looking for an asbestos contractor that has experience in the Mecklenburg County area, MCAQ has compiled a

list of local companies [HERE](#) for your reference; however, it is still recommended that you verify the credentials of any specific individuals that work at your home.

Once identified, should asbestos always be removed?

Asbestos-containing materials that are in good condition and have not been sanded, chipped, crumbled, or sawed are often better left in place and covered over for additional protection. There are no regulations that require removal of asbestos-containing materials unless a structure is being demolished or renovated and is subject to the federal Asbestos NESHAP (National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants) regulation. Individual homes that are not being demolished or renovated as part of a larger project or burned as part of a live fire training exercise would not usually be subject.

To learn more about Asbestos NESHAP requirements, visit our website at <http://airquality.charmeck.org/asbestos>. To verify whether your home is subject to the Asbestos NESHAP, please review MCAQ's [residential applicability questionnaire](#).

If there are no requirements for individual homeowners relating to asbestos testing, why is my renovation/demolition contractor requesting asbestos samples?

If your home was built before 1981, OSHA requires worker protection when removing presumed (suspect) asbestos-containing building materials in all structures; regardless of whether it is a commercial or residential structure. MCAQ always recommends that suspected asbestos-containing materials be properly identified before conducting renovation or demolition activities.

When does my contractor need to get a permit from the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services for a renovation?

If your contractor is removing more than 160 square feet, 35 cubic feet (for loose materials), or 260 linear feet (for pipe insulation) of asbestos-containing building materials, and you do not currently use the home as your primary residence, then the contractor must apply for a permit with NCDHHS: <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/asbestos/ahmp.html>. Notification to Mecklenburg County Air Quality would only be required if your home was subject to Asbestos NESHAP requirements, as noted above.

And, although Mecklenburg County's Air Quality Regulations may not apply, you should still consult with Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement (980-314-CODE) before starting a renovation or demolition to determine whether building permits may be necessary.

I don't have to worry about this for newer buildings, though, because asbestos has been banned in new building materials, right?

While not commonly found today, asbestos use in building materials has only been partially banned, specifically from spray-on insulation, paper materials, and any new uses. Asbestos may still be used in the manufacturing of flooring materials, asphaltic roofing materials and roofing felts, asbestos-cement products, asbestos clothing, pipeline wraps, non-roofing coatings, and automotive products.

How should asbestos-containing waste materials be disposed of?

Asbestos-containing building waste materials should be wetted down and gently placed in 6 ml Polyethylene waste bags. The bags should then be disposed of at a hazardous waste landfill.

Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

You should contact Mecklenburg County Air Quality at 704-336-5430 or email neshap@mecklenburgcountync.gov.