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Glass and Glazing Federation

ADVICE TO CONSUMERS  
REFERENCE 60.8  
MARCH 2016

# Asbestos

[myglazing.com](http://myglazing.com)

Don't play Russian roulette with Asbestos



## Some little known facts

- Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous silicate mineral.
- It's been used for over 4,000 years.
- During the 1st Century AD, both Romans and Greeks observed that slaves weaving asbestos cloth were affected by sickness of the lungs.

## Where is it found?

Despite being a health risk asbestos was found to have very desirable physical properties. It was a good tensile material which was resistant to fire, heat, electrical and chemical damage. It also had a variety of uses in the home such as adhesive in flooring tiles, acoustic pads for stainless steel sinks and toilet cisterns.

In building construction up until the mid-1990s it was often used in fireproofing roofing, insulating board (early version of plasterboard) guttering, rainwater pipes and soffit boards. In 2010 the **British Lung Foundation** calculated that some 14 million homes were built when asbestos was being used as a building material. Its use in construction has been banned since November 1999.

Although extremely rare, cases have been reported of board containing asbestos being found in buildings completed after this time.



Insulating board made using asbestos



More insulating board made using asbestos

## What are the dangers?

Generally, asbestos is only a risk if you disturb or damage it and fibres are released into the air. However, poorly maintained board containing asbestos can expose householders and those working on buildings to asbestos fibres.

If poorly managed, asbestos removal can leave householders and those removing asbestos materials with serious health problems. Inhalation of asbestos fibres exposes you to health risks which can lead to lung-related diseases such as:

**Asbestosis:** Fibrosis/scarring of the lungs, which is irreversible.

**Lung cancer:** Identical to that caused by smoking. The risk of lung cancer substantially increases if the exposed person is also a smoker.

**Mesothelioma:** A specific cancer of the inner lining of the chest wall or abdominal cavity.

*NB: These diseases have a long latency period (15–30 years).*



A cement downpipe made with 10-15% asbestos

For further information on these diseases please visit **British Lung Foundation** at [www.blf.org.uk](http://www.blf.org.uk)

Asbestos can be found in any building built before the year 2000 and causes around 5,000 deaths every year. **Health and Safety Executive's** website has extensive information on asbestos and how to manage the risks associated with it [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos)

Management of asbestos is governed by the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. Within these regulations are very strict legal requirements regarding the safe removal and disposal of materials containing asbestos.



The soffit board is the horizontal board tucked away under the vertical fascia board, which is the long straight board that runs along the lower edge of the roof and often carries the guttering.

### What will a GGF Member company offer?

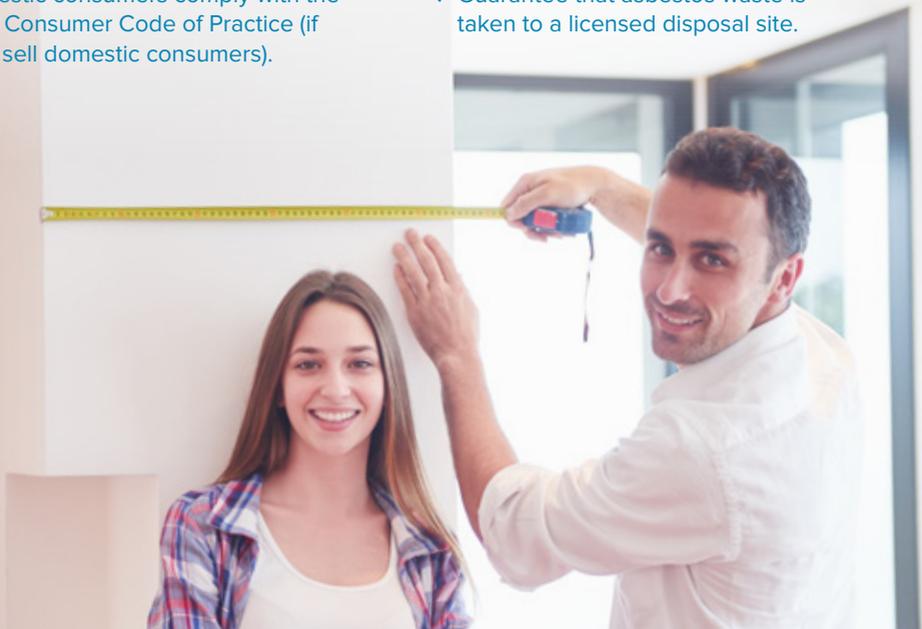
If asbestos is suspected and work is being carried out that could disturb the material, you are advised to seek advice from a competent assessor. The Glass and Glazing Federation cannot promote the work of individual assessors, however we would recommend customers discuss the matter with a GGF Member company.

### By engaging a GGF Member you will have assurance that they:

- ✓ Have access to the latest information and guidance provided by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the GGF.
- ✓ GGF Member companies who sell to domestic consumers comply with the GGF Consumer Code of Practice (if they sell domestic consumers).

✓ Have signed up to the GGF/HSE Code of Practice 'Work with Domestic Soffits and Rainwater Goods containing Asbestos Cement' which requires member companies to:

- ✓ Sample any suspected material prior to disturbance and have it analysed by a UKAS accredited laboratory.
- ✓ Where necessary, appoint a HSE licensed asbestos contractor to remove the asbestos.
- ✓ Ensure the removal is carried out in such a way as to avoid the dispersal of asbestos fibres.
- ✓ Guarantee that asbestos waste is taken to a licensed disposal site.



Glass and Glazing Federation  
54 Ayres Street  
London SE11EU

T: 020 7939 9100  
[www.ggf.org.uk](http://www.ggf.org.uk)  
[www.myglazing.com](http://www.myglazing.com)

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