

HANDLING ASBESTOS

Asbestos pipe insulation may be white or grey on the inside. It can be chalky, powder-like or corrugated air cell (similar to the edge of a cardboard box). Asbestos pipe insulation may be found on hot water or steam pipes in crawl spaces, in utility rooms, in basements or in furnace rooms.

If asbestos is present or suspected to be present, it is best to just leave it alone. Asbestos is a health risk only when fibers are released into the air and they are then inhaled. Avoid touching, hitting, puncturing, sanding, tearing or rubbing the surface with any object. These actions may potentially release fibers into the air.

If an asbestos containing material is damaged by mistake and falls to the floor, **DO NOT DRY SWEEP OR VACUUM IT UP.** The fibers are small and can pass through a regular vacuum filter. Vacuuming or sweeping will airborne more fibers into the air. If the asbestos needs to be cleaned up immediately (emergency), wet mopping is an effective way to reduce fiber releases. The mop should be discarded after use as asbestos contaminated waste. **Removal or repair of asbestos is best left to a specially trained worker.** If suspect asbestos containing material is damaged in your building, contact the DPW Environmental Division. However, in residential areas contact the Picerne Area Coordinator.

Floor coverings, such as vinyl tile and sheets, may contain a small amount of asbestos for strength. Fibers can be released through sanding, hammering by mechanical means, dry buffing, or pulverizing the tile into small pieces. Use soap and water, or other liquid cleaning detergent to clean tile or sheet floor coverings.

GETTING MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions or would like more information about asbestos, please contact the Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Division at (301) 677-9648.