



Does my building need an Asbestos Register?



**Always ask for the
Asbestos Register**

Asbestos Still Kills

h seni
CONTROLLING RISK TOGETHER

ourwork 
ourhealthourlives

Are you responsible for a building constructed before 2000?

Do tradespeople work in your building?

You have a legal obligation to check for asbestos.

Asbestos is still a major killer of tradespeople in Northern Ireland.

Protect everyone with an Asbestos Register

Buildings constructed or refurbished before 2000 may contain asbestos. If you own, occupy, manage or have responsibilities for non-domestic premises which may contain asbestos, or if you are responsible for the non-private i.e. common parts of domestic premises like halls and lift areas in flats, you will either have:

- A legal duty under the Control of Asbestos Regulations (NI) 2012 (Regulation 4) to manage the risk from this material; or
- A legal duty to co-operate with whoever manages that risk.

Tenant/Landlord Responsibilities

For rented non-domestic premises, responsibility may be set out through a tenancy agreement or contract – outlining the extent of the tenant’s and landlord’s responsibilities, and explaining what happens in the case of premises with more than one occupier. If responsibility for asbestos is not made clear within a tenancy agreement or contract, tenants are advised to seek clarification with their landlord as soon as possible.

If you are unsure of your responsibilities - seek professional advice

Know who’s at risk

Tradespeople carrying out work and maintenance work are most at risk. They are more likely to disturb or damage asbestos containing materials and often don’t realise they are working on asbestos.

Tradespersons who are most likely to disturb asbestos

Electricians	Security installers
Plumbers	Fire alarm installers
Joiners	Shop fitters
Contractors	Insulation installers
Plasterers	IT installers
Carpenters	Telecoms installers

This list does not include all occupations at risk from potential exposure to asbestos

Most asbestos containing materials in good condition are safe. Asbestos is only dangerous when it's disturbed, damaged, or worked on, as this can release asbestos fibres into the air. If these fibres are breathed in they may damage the lungs and can lead to the following fatal and serious diseases:



Mesothelioma

Mesothelioma is a cancer which affects the lining of the lungs (pleura) and the lining surrounding the lower digestive tract (peritoneum). It is almost exclusively related to asbestos exposure and by the time it is diagnosed, it is almost always fatal.

Asbestos-related lung cancer

Asbestos-related lung cancer is the same as (looks the same as) lung cancer caused by smoking and other causes. It is estimated that there is around one lung cancer for every mesothelioma death.

Asbestosis

Asbestosis is a serious scarring condition of the lung that normally occurs after heavy exposure to asbestos over many years. This condition can cause progressive shortness of breath, and in severe cases can be fatal.

Pleural thickening

Pleural thickening is generally a problem that happens after heavy asbestos exposure. The lining of the lung (pleura) thickens and swells. If this gets worse, the lung itself can be squeezed, and can cause shortness of breath and discomfort in the chest.



The risk from exposure to asbestos can be managed by locating and identifying areas in which asbestos is present, and by taking steps to manage it. Following these steps will safeguard the health of tradespeople and others within your building.

8 Steps to Asbestos Risk Management

Complete these 8 steps before you carry out any repair, maintenance or refurbishment work to your building.

1. Are you responsible for maintenance and repair activities for non-domestic buildings, either through a contract or tenancy agreement, or because you own the building?

Yes.

You are a dutyholder, and have a legal responsibility to manage asbestos.

Go to Step 2.

No.

The person who is in charge should know where the asbestos is.

Ask them to show you the register or record.

2. Was the building built before 2000?

Yes.

Assume asbestos is present.

Go to step 3.

No.

Asbestos is unlikely to be present. No action needed.

3. Do you have evidence that asbestos exists within your building already?
This may be previous asbestos surveys, building or insurance reports. Use this information as a starting point.

Go to step 4.

4. Identify the asbestos within your building.

Inspect your building and carry out a detailed survey of your premises to identify all materials that may contain asbestos (e.g insulating board, ceiling tiles and insulation work on pipes work) including areas normally not visited, e.g roof voids, store rooms etc. You can **either** presume that asbestos is present, **or** confirm its presence/absence through use of a more detailed survey* and sampling. If you opt to presume, any subsequent work should be carried out with full asbestos safety precautions. If you are not confident to undertake this yourself – seek specialist advice.

Go to step 5.

5. Keep a written record.

This is known as an Asbestos Register. This needs to be easy to read. It could be a plan or diagram of the building, a written list or a computer based record:

- Record where the asbestos containing material is, and its condition.
- Record roles and responsibilities with regard to managing asbestos.

It is important that the register is accessible – particularly if it is being used to tell tradespeople about the location of asbestos (see step 7).

Go to step 6.

6. Act on your findings.

Draw up a priority action list:

- Give high priority to damaged material and materials likely to be disturbed. These will need to be repaired, enclosed or removed using trained personnel, a licensed contractor may be required.
- If materials are in good condition and are unlikely to be disturbed – leave in place but regularly review their condition.
- Record what you find and the action you take.

Go to step 7.

7. Keep people informed.

- Inform the relevant people and your workforce where the asbestos is located within your building.
- Consider labelling ACM's (asbestos containing materials).
- Consider who works on or near asbestos. Tell them where the asbestos is before they start work.
- Anyone who may work on asbestos must be trained and use safe working methods.
- Remember, some work requires a licence, if you are unsure what to do, seek professional advice.

Go to step 8.

8. Keep your records up-to-date.

Even after your action list is completed you need to continue to manage risks:

- Walk round your building at least once a year, and update your plan as necessary.
- Check materials regularly to see if they have deteriorated, been damaged or disturbed in any way.
- If you find deterioration, act on your findings.

Go to step 6.

Should you require assistance you could get help from a competent asbestos surveyor.

*When you are identifying the asbestos, it may be better to use an accredited company or someone who is certified. Any survey carried out should be based on 'Asbestos: The Survey Guide' HSG264, which is free to download from www.hse.gov.uk. A poor survey could end up costing more money in the long run.

Know the dangers.

Where are asbestos containing materials likely to be found?



Asbestos insulation on pipes



Asbestos insulation board ceiling



Vinyl floor tiles containing asbestos



Asbestos cement as fabric of building

Asbestos Product	What it was used for
Sprayed asbestos (limpet)	Fire protection in ducts and to structural steel work, fire breaks in ceiling voids etc.
Lagging	Thermal insulation of pipes and boilers
Insulating boards	Fire protection, thermal insulation, wall partitions, ducts
Asbestos cement products, flat or corrugated sheets	Roofing and wall cladding, gutters, rainwater pipes, water tanks, flues
Certain textured coatings	Decorative plasters, paints
Asbestos ropes and cloth	Gaskets, insulation, seals

Know who to ask

HSENI has carried out campaigns to advise dutyholders of the dangers of asbestos. Through these campaigns, dutyholders have been encouraged to create an Asbestos Register and provide a copy of it to all tradespeople before any work commences.

Remember the Register must locate all Asbestos Containing Materials that could be damaged or disturbed by normal activities, by foreseeable maintenance, or by installing new equipment.

As a dutyholder, it's your legal responsibility to ensure you have an asbestos register for your premises and make this available to tradespeople in advance to any maintenance or repair work taking place.

If you do not have an asbestos register, tradespeople may refuse to carry out the work required, which could delay your project and cost you time and money.

Remember a Refurbishment/Demolition Survey will also be required should your premises, or part of it, require any upgrading, refurbishment or demolition works. A surveyor will be required to carry out a Refurbishment/Demolition Survey.

The Refurbishment/Demolition Survey must locate and identify all Asbestos Containing Materials before any structural work begins at a specified location or on specified equipment at your premises. It will involve the surveyor carrying out a destructive inspection and asbestos disturbance. The area surveyed within your premises must be vacated, and certified 'fit for reoccupation' after the survey.

Remember as a dutyholder your duty to manage is all about protecting yourself and others from exposure to asbestos fibres. If the asbestos is in good condition and not likely to be disturbed, it is usually safer to leave it in place and manage it appropriately. Removal may be unnecessary and costly.

Protect everyone with an Asbestos register.

Asbestos is still a major killer of tradespeople in Northern Ireland.

Want to know more?

Find out more about working with asbestos:

Visit: [hseni.gov.uk/asbestos](https://www.hseni.gov.uk/asbestos)

Tel: 0800 0320 121

Useful contacts:

Asbestos Removal Contracts Association
www.arca.org.uk or Tel: 01283 531126

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
www.rics.org or Tel: 0870 333 1600

United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) for Asbestos Surveys
www.ukas.com or Tel: 020 8917 8400

To access the full list of asbestos surveyors visit www.hseni.gov.uk/asbestos

