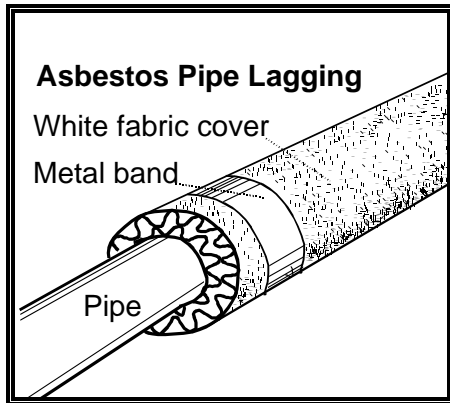


ASBESTOS

Almost all homes built before 1990 contain asbestos. Fortunately, only some individuals are susceptible to its pernicious effects, and only some susceptible individuals develop cancer or other lung diseases when exposed to asbestos. Some (controversial) evidence suggests that the type of asbestos that predominates in houses-- chrysotile-- generally is not associated with cancer.

Moreover, an EPA study of homes that contained *friable* asbestos (easily crushed material that contains 1% or more asbestos) found asbestos levels in the air that were not significantly higher than outdoor levels (and about 1/100th the level permitted in asbestos factories). Nevertheless, in July, 1989, the EPA ordered a phase-out of asbestos (restrictions had been in place since the 1970s). Moreover, some lending institutions restrict loans on houses with asbestos, and some tradespersons may refuse to work on them.



VINYL FLOOR COVERINGS

The Resilient Floor Covering Institute publishes a removal guide (call 1-202-833-2635). The safest policy? Cover old floor with new underlayment or sheet goods.

PIPE INSULATION

Pipe insulation ("lagging") can be dealt with by the homeowner who is concerned that such asbestos may be unsafe. Here's how, according to *Popular Mechanics* (November 1986):

1. Purchase and use safety clothing and a respirator **with a Type-H** filter cartridge (call Direct Safety Co., 1-800-528-7405).
2. Spray soapy water over the asbestos.
3. Wrap in plastic kitchen wrap.
4. Wrap kitchen wrap with good quality duct tape.
5. Paint tape (use acrylic-latex paint).
6. Dispose of safety clothes.

ENCAPSULATION

Materials can be applied by any painter with an airless sprayer. These are Penetrating Encapsulant #1 and Bridging Encapsulant #4. Contact Eppert Oil & Chemical, 9100 Freeland Ave., Detroit, MI 48228 (313-273-7374).

DISPOSAL

Disposal of asbestos in conventional land fills is prohibited by the EPA, and strict laws govern its transportation. Worse yet, some states do not allow disposal of asbestos within their borders. Owners of homes with asbestos-containing materials may find disposal of them to be very expensive in such cases. Presuming that old flooring that contains asbestos will merely be covered over instead of removed, the most likely disposal problem may occur when the old roof is removed. Troublesome roofing materials include some old asphalt singles, old built-up roofs (BURs), and cement-asbestos shingles.

HELP

The Consumer Product Safety Commission may provide help in verifying the presence of asbestos and may give the latest information on how to deal with it. Their number is (800) 638-CPSC.

REFERENCES

"Asbestos Fears Overblown?"
Journal of Light Construction 8, #7 (1990): 6.

"Asbestos Fears Out of Proportion to Health Risk, Harvard Study Says." *ASHI Reporter* XII #4 (1990): 1.

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