



Contents and soft furnishings

LOOSE FILL ASBESTOS INSULATION ERADICATION SCHEME

July 2022

OVERVIEW

The information contained in this document is general and intended to provide guidance to homeowners to assist them in making informed choices about their possessions. It does not purport to be comprehensive or apply individually to a particular affected home. This guidance was first developed by the Asbestos Response Taskforce in consultation with the Chief Health Officer, the Work Safety Commissioner and licensed asbestos assessors and has been reviewed by Dr Ian Gardner, Senior Physician in Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Department of Defence.

You should read the whole document carefully in conjunction with the report of the asbestos assessment conducted on your home. If you have any questions about what to do with your possessions, you should seek the advice of a licensed asbestos assessor.

OVERVIEW

There is no practical way to certify that household contents in affected homes are not contaminated by asbestos fibres.

Nevertheless, it is likely most household contents can be removed from most affected homes provided they are not taken from known contaminated areas. The Loose Fill Asbestos Coordination Team (Coordination Team) and WorkSafe ACT encourage a measured response to decision making by homeowners about their possessions, as well as by businesses and the wider community.

Destruction of all contents in every affected home is unnecessary, distressing, costly and wasteful.

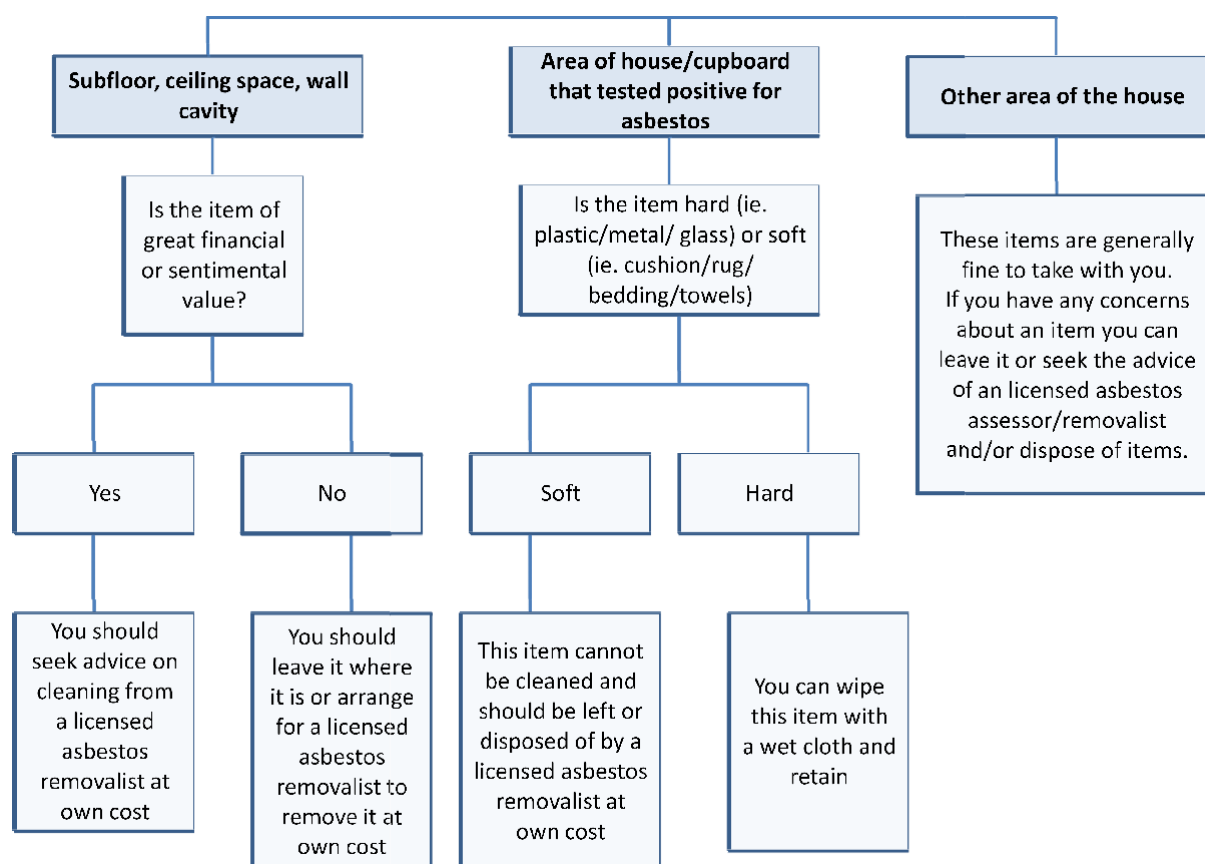
Even where asbestos fibres have been detected in settled dust within living or storage areas of a home, expert advice to the Coordination Team is that the health risk from possible exposure associated with moving goods from other areas of a home is low, but cannot be discounted.

Expert advice provided to the Coordination Team is that the risk to the community associated with potential contamination of contents in affected homes is similarly low.

Goods stored in subfloor and ceiling areas, and in cupboards where fibres have been detected, should not be moved or recovered unless they have been decontaminated by a licensed asbestos removalist.

A similar approach should be adopted in relation to all contents of homes where residents have been advised to vacate their homes, especially where fibres have been detected in air conditioning and heating ducts.

A suggested decision making approach is set out in the following figure:



WHAT DO I DO WITH CONTENTS STORED IN KNOWN CONTAMINATED AREAS?

Known contaminated areas are:

- wall cavities, roof spaces and subfloor areas
- locations where a licensed asbestos assessor has located asbestos fibres (for example cupboards)

You should not try to remove, sell, or give away goods that have been stored in a contaminated subfloor, roof space or cupboard. These goods should be disposed of by a licensed asbestos removalist, or left in your vacated house for safe disposal by the Coordination Team as part of the demolition process.

If you want to recover goods of great financial or sentimental value from these locations, you should engage a licensed asbestos removalist and seek their advice on building approval requirements. This will be at your cost and it is important to note it is impossible to certify goods are not contaminated.

If a licensed asbestos assessor has made recommendations that certain goods be disposed of, you should follow that advice. Any fabric items that have been stored in a known contaminated area (for example soft furnishings, soft toys, bedding, linen and clothing) cannot be effectively decontaminated.

Any items in living areas with hard cleanable surfaces (for example crockery, portable electrical items, furniture) are unlikely to be significantly contaminated and you can wipe any

visible dust off these items yourself with a wet cloth as a precaution. Advice received by the Coordination Team is that you are generally at low risk of exposure to asbestos fibres in this activity. However, if you are concerned, you can choose to engage a licensed asbestos removalist.

WHAT CAN I CLEAN AND TAKE?

Household contents from living areas of your home that are not known contaminated areas can be wiped down with wet cloths before removal as a precaution.

WHAT CAN I REMOVE WITHOUT CLEANING?

The following sorts of goods are most unlikely to be contaminated:

- goods in rooms or areas that have been cleaned by a licensed asbestos removalist
- garden and outdoor furnishings and contents of unaffected exterior sheds

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Coordination Team will not reimburse the costs of decontamination of goods stored in known contaminated areas by licensed asbestos removalists.

While insurance policies often exclude asbestos contamination, they differ. Homeowners, tenants and landlords are encouraged to discuss claims in relation to contents with their insurers. Floor coverings and curtains will be included as part of the valuation process under the Buyback Program.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Call Access Canberra on 13 22 81 and ask to speak with the Loose Fill Asbestos Coordination Team, or email loosefillasbestos@act.gov.au

ACCESSIBILITY

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues as accessible as possible. If you have difficulty reading a standard printed publication and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, such as large print, please phone 13 22 81 or email loosefillasbestos@act.gov.au



If English is not your first language and you require a translating and interpreting service, please phone 13 14 50 and ask for 13 22 81.

If you are deaf, or have a speech or hearing impairment, and need the teletypewriter service, please phone 13 36 77 and ask for 13 22 81.

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