



Frequently Asked Questions – Asbestos

1. Who is at risk of asbestos exposure?

Asbestos was added to over 3,000 building materials. Workers and homeowners who renovate or demolish buildings are at risk of being exposed to asbestos fibres. Although asbestos was phased out in Canada in the 1990's, it was not banned.

2. Is asbestos still mined?

In Canada the last operating asbestos mine stopped production in 2012 due to financial issues. Mining of asbestos has not yet been banned in Canada. Asbestos is still mined in approximately 1/2 dozen countries. Canada has not prohibited the importation of materials containing asbestos. Imported building materials, consumer goods, and brake pads may still contain asbestos.

3. How can I tell if a material contains asbestos?

Unfortunately, it's hard to know if you're working with asbestos because it is often mixed with other materials. The only way to know for certain is to have the material tested by a qualified professional. Click here for WorkSafeBC's [Potential Sources of Asbestos in the Home](#).

4. Why is asbestos a concern?

If left intact, materials containing asbestos are not a health risk. However, when damaged or disturbed, asbestos fibers are released into the air. Because asbestos fibres are so small they are easily inhaled and stay airborne for hours or even days. Repeated exposure can lead to lung cancer and other lethal asbestos-related diseases.

5. My house was built after 1990, why do I still have to have the materials tested?

Imported building materials may contain asbestos. Testing the materials, including drywall/gypsum helps to protect the health and safety of the employees and customers of the Sechelt Landfill and Pender Harbour Transfer Station. Also, the BC Ministry of Environment does not allow the Sechelt Landfill to accept drywall for landfilling. Additionally, the drywall/gypsum recycling facility requires asbestos testing and only accepts drywall with "negative" test results.

6. Why can't I bring my drywall/gypsum that contains asbestos to the Sechelt Landfill?

The BC Ministry of Environment does not allow the Sechelt Landfill to accept drywall for landfilling, containing asbestos.

7. How can I find a qualified professional?

[List of companies](#)

The list is provided for convenience and is not necessarily complete. Please note that the SCRDC does not endorse any of the companies listed.

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8. How is testing done?

Samples of building materials that may be disturbed or damaged during a renovation or demolition are taken and sent to a certified laboratory for testing.

9. How much does testing cost?

Cost depends on the number of samples that need to be tested and how quickly the test results are needed. On average the cost for one sample with results within a week will be approximately \$75.

10. How many samples are needed?

The number of samples will vary depending on your project. A qualified professional will know which materials need to be sampled and how many samples to take.

11. What if my renovation will take longer than 6 months?

(negative test results are valid for 6 months)

Please contact the Solid Waste Operations Coordinator at 604-885-6800 to discuss options.