



Asbestos in Domestic Properties - Asbestos Containing Linoleum

What is asbestos containing linoleum and where is it found?

Some linoleum tiles can contain very small amounts of white asbestos fibres, these are usually the darker coloured tiles. Occasionally the adhesive used on the back of the tiles can also contain white asbestos or asbestos paper lining can be found on the back of some of the tiles. These tiles are traditionally found on the floors of either kitchens or bathrooms.

Are there any health risks associated with asbestos containing linoleum and affiliated products?

Any asbestos content in these products is always white asbestos and does not pose a measurable risk to health in these products. Occasionally it is claimed that other types of asbestos may be present but do not let anyone tell you this becomes a problem. The asbestos content is too small to pose any measurable risk to health.

Do you need to remove your asbestos containing linoleum and associated products by law?

There is no measurable risk to health from the asbestos content in your linoleum tiles and any contractor who tries to force you to remove it based on this is trying to exploit your ignorance. Similarly, there is no law demanding that you remove the linoleum tiles so don't let anyone tell you this is a legal requirement.

If you are selling your house, can your property become devalued if asbestos linoleum is present?

A common scam if you are selling your house is for a surveyor to suggest you need to remove your asbestos containing linoleum; threatening you with devaluation of your property if you fail to comply.

You are under NO legal obligation to remove asbestos containing linoleum from your property and anyone threatening devaluation of your property under the pretext of the new buyer having to remove them once they move in is fraud. The prospective buyer of your property will not be under any legal obligation to remove them either.

Does the presence of asbestos containing linoleum in a house you are about to buy condemn it?

Any surveyor condemning a house you are intending to purchase because of the presence of asbestos containing linoleum tiles is providing you with incorrect information. Neither the current homeowner nor you are under any legal obligation to remove the linoleum.

The presence of the linoleum tiles, or associated products, does not reduce the value of the property or pose any measurable risk to health; the best thing you can do is leave them alone.

If you want to your asbestos containing linoleum removed for other reasons, do you need a specially licensed contractor?

Asbestos containing linoleum tiles and associated products are not licensable products; you do not require a specially licensed asbestos removal contractor to do the work. Any competent jobbing contractor can do the work for you; we suggest ringing around a few local contractors for quotes. This will be cheaper than unnecessarily hiring a specially licensed asbestos contractor.

If you want to remove asbestos containing linoleum from your domestic property yourself, can you?

If you feel you are competent enough to remove your asbestos linoleum tiles yourself, the product is not licensable, so you are able to carry out the work yourself.

As with all such work, we urge you to take care handling materials and observe appropriate safety procedures. The HSE suggests you kit yourself out with all the necessary precautionary safety equipment (mask, gloves, etc) and treat the asbestos tiles with respect. If you need to break them up, do so carefully and double bag them ready for disposal.

If you do remove the tiles, should they be disposed of in a special tip?

Although posing no measurable risk to health, and not needing to be handled by licensed contractors, asbestos containing linoleum tiles and associated products do still need to be taken to a specially licensed tip.

Some local councils provide a domestic asbestos waste collection service; we suggest telephoning your local council to see if you live in an area where this is available. If they do not offer this service, they will be able to advise you on where your local asbestos licensed tip is and options of how to get your waste there.