

The following information is provided by Vriend Home Inspections Ltd after having done considerable research. There may be differing opinions on this matter. Determining whether or not your house contains asbestos is beyond the scope of a normal home inspection although possible signs of asbestos will be noted.

Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral which was used in residential construction until about 1980. It was widely used in insulation (pipe and duct wrap and unintentionally in vermiculite), floor and ceiling tiles, acoustical plaster, shingles and other roofing materials and exterior siding. **Asbestos fibers are only harmful when they become airborne and are inhaled.** Inhaled asbestos fibers could cause various types of cancers, usually forty years after inhaling the fibers.

So should you be concerned about asbestos in your home if it was built before 1980? That depends what you are planning to do to your house. If you plan to live in the house the way it is and not renovate it, you could encapsulate any materials that may contain asbestos to eliminate the chance of airborne fibers. This would mean sealing old white duct tape up with new duct tape. This would mean not just ripping down or damaging old ceiling tiles or ripping up old floor tiles or linoleum. The roofing materials will probably have been replaced unless a new roof was placed over an old roof. And the attic, if it contains the small pea sized granules of some gray looking material, you may have asbestos containing vermiculite or 'Zonolite' in your attic. If you never plan to do any renovations or remodeling to your home the attic is not a concern as it is in a concealed space of its own unless you have some light box or other penetrations in your ceiling where the wind could blow attic materials into your living space.

If you decide to test materials susceptible of asbestos and the results come back positive you can either spend large amounts of money removing the asbestos containing materials or you can try to seal them up by covering them with new material as in the case of the white duct tape or in the case of vermiculite in the attic you could seal around all your light boxes and cover the insulation with new insulation in a sealed manner.

Asbestos containing materials could diminish the value of your house when your try to resell it.

Asbestos testing is done by EPOCH Analytical-- 604-521-6806 and is presently located at #19, 62 Fawcett Road in Coquitlam which is just over the Port Mann Bridge. Each sample test costs \$35 (2011) and results are available within 24 hours. For that price the samples have to be brought there. You should wear protective gear when obtaining a sample.

Any questions call Jim at Vriend Home Inspections Ltd, 604-857-2413.