

Asbestos Abatement for Homeowners-Background and FAQ

Is it better to leave asbestos in place or remove it?

Generally speaking, if it is in good condition, leave it be. But there is no harm in removing it if you wish. If damaged, the cost of professional repair for small projects is generally not much less than the cost of removal. Guidance can be provided to homeowners for "do-it yourself" repairs for low-risk materials. Obviously, some things are best left to the pros.

You may have heard that it is safer to leave asbestos in place because sometimes asbestos air levels are higher after abatement. This erroneous belief originated from one early USEPA study when asbestos abatement was in its infancy. This may have been a result of the background levels from installation or previous improper removals rather than the removal being studied. Abatement methods are generally well-established and safe. Even when initial air clearance sampling fails, it is not difficult with additional cleaning and air-scrubbing to get airborne levels back to within safe limits.

Is it permissible for abatement contractors to check their own work?

Yes. Sometimes the abatement company will hire someone to oversee their work and do air monitoring. However, since they are contracted directly for the abatement company, they are sometimes reluctant to speak up for fear of loss of business. This is why Tri-Tech offers fully independent testing and clearance services to homeowners.

What if I retain Tri-Tech to perform independent air testing and the results fail?

Be sure to discuss this possibility with the abatement firm prior to quoting. You can retain them on a "performance basis" to be responsible for all additional air testing and cleaning costs, but you must agree to this in writing up front. It is fair for an abatement contractor to charge more for additional cleaning efforts to minimize the possibility of this happening. Otherwise, you would probably be responsible for future cleaning and air testing costs in the event of a failed air test.

Why retaining an independent inspector is a good idea:



This asbestos debris was left behind in the dark corners and closets of a residential floor tile abatement project.



This asbestos debris was found in the shrubs and gardens of a residential shingle siding abatement project.

Neither of these firms would be considered disreputable "rip and skip" firms. They are typical abatement firms that work quickly and don't have an independent second set of eyes to check their work. This minor final clean-up of debris is part of the clearance service that Tri-Tech offers. If more than one bag of debris remains, Tri-Tech would request that the abatement contractor return to properly clean up after themselves.