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Homeowner Sampling Guidance

In general, intact/loose pieces of building materials are generally acceptable. If you need to collect a sample, the following is offered for guidance. Submit samples in a re-sealable plastic sandwich bag. Samples may be submitted via US Mail with appropriate protective packaging.

Asbestos (postage stamp-sized sample)

- ❖ Floor tile-Use heat and/or saturation with water to loosen the tile and carefully pry up the tile with a putty knife or similar tool. Make sure the sample includes a dime-sized amount of mastic on the reverse that is of sufficient thickness that it can be scraped of in the laboratory without disturbing the tile. With flooring, always be aware of the possibility of additional flooring layers or underlayments below, which should be tested as well.
- ❖ Linoleum- Mist or wet with water and cut with a utility knife. Try to recover the felt backing or other underlayments or additional flooring layers below (if any) and the glue.
- ❖ Siding/roofing shingle-Look for pieces of debris in your garden or cracked corners near the screw holes for exterior fixtures. Inconspicuous locations include behind trim, fixtures or shutters or under flashing. If destructive sampling is required, place a wet paper towel on the shingle, score with a razor blade or utility knife and break off at a corner.
- ❖ Pipe and duct insulation-Sampling not recommended unless damaged and you can collect an intact piece. Mist with water and wet wipe any debris after collecting a sample.

I do not generally recommend sampling be done by homeowners for plaster, drywall, door/window caulk, window putty, vermiculite insulation and other materials but samples will be accepted for unofficial purposes and analyses and results will be given with appropriate disclaimers.

Paint (matchbook-sized sample)

Collect large intact pieces of peeling paint with minimal breakage. Note if the surface is bare or additional paint layers are present below.

Mold (matchbook-sized sample)

Collect an intact piece of the building material in question with minimal disturbance if possible. For non-destructive sampling, apply a clear adhesive tape to the surface and then stick it to the inside of a re-sealable plastic sandwich bag.

Note: Samples collected by homeowners are not necessarily acceptable for official purposes. Please check with your renovation contractor, local residential building authority or real estate agent for any specific requirements. Residential environmental testing is generally required to be disclosed during property transactions whether for official or advisory purposes.

Commercial-Grade Indoor Environmental Testing on a Residential Budget