

HOMEOWNERS WARNED OF DEADLY DUST

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DIY enthusiasts keen on doing a spot of home renovation are being warned to call in the experts if they discover asbestos in their home.

Around 4,000* people a year are now dying as a result of inhaling the killer dust – a stark warning to anyone renovating a property who attempts to remove asbestos during a DIY project.

Denise Kitchener, chief executive of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) says the number of asbestos related deaths has now overtaken the number of people killed in road accidents.*

“The last thing we want to do is alarm people or stop people from carrying out DIY and improving their homes,” she said. “Our message is simple – go ahead with the DIY but if you find asbestos in your home, do not attempt to remove it. Asbestos only becomes dangerous when it is disturbed so leave it well alone and call in the experts.”

Denise Kitchener said many people are unaware that asbestos may be present in their homes, let alone be aware of the danger it poses.

“Of course people can tackle DIY without coming any harm at all, but we urge people to be vigilant.”

APIL says the following should be treated with caution:

- the stripping of old asbestos insulation material
- removal of roofing felts, old floor and ceiling tiles, textured paints and plaster containing asbestos
- removal of partition boards containing asbestos
- removal of asbestos cement products, commonly compressed into flat or corrugated sheets for roofing or wall cladding
- removal of specific textured coatings (some forms of Artex contain levels of asbestos)

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Note to editors:

* 4,000 deaths from asbestos: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causedis/asbfaq.htm>

* 3341 deaths from road traffic accidents taken from an average of deaths from 2000-2006

- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) was established in 1990 by a group of lawyers working on behalf of personal injury victims and now has more than 5,000 members. APIL campaigns for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own.

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Photographs are available on request

Further information can also be found at the organisation's website- www.apil.org.uk