

July 2003

AP232

DIY FANS WARNED OF ASBESTOS RISKS

Eager do-it-yourselfers should beware of uncovering deadly asbestos while carrying out renovations, lawyers have warned.

The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, whose members see at close hand the tragic effects of asbestos-related disease, is highlighting the dangers associated with disturbing asbestos built into sheds, garages and homes. Asbestos, which is only hazardous when damaged, disturbed or dismantled, is currently linked with around 3,000 deaths every year.

Association president David Marshall points out: “Summertime is a busy period for DIY enthusiasts, and more and more householders are now tackling quite ambitious projects. Anyone uncovering this material needs to be aware of the dangers and protect themselves.

“We advise anyone who suspects that there are asbestos products or materials containing asbestos in their home or outbuildings to seek urgent advice from the Environmental Health Department of their local council.”

Asbestos becomes dangerous when broken down into small dust particles and breathed in. It can still commonly be found in all kinds of buildings constructed or refurbished between 1950 and 1980. The tiny fibres can lead to invariably fatal malignant tumours of the chest (mesothelioma), or lung cancer as well as disease such as asbestosis. It can take anything from 15 to 60 years for the harm caused by asbestos to become apparent.

mf

AP232/2

Blue and brown asbestos, the two most dangerous types, are now banned entirely in the UK but it is only since 1999 that all forms of asbestos in building materials have been outlawed. White asbestos is now restricted to limited use in certain manufacturing processes. Identification of the three types – all of which pose health risks – is not down to colour alone.

Activities to be wary of include:

- the stripping of old asbestos insulation material
- removal of roofing felts, old floor and ceiling tiles, textured paints and plasters containing asbestos
- removal of partition boards containing asbestos
- removal of asbestos cement products compressed into flat or corrugated sheets used as roofing or wall cladding
- removal of certain textured coatings.

- ends -

Note to Editors:

The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) campaigns to prevent needless injuries caused by negligence and for changes in the law to help people who have been injured to gain proper redress through the courts and prevent avoidable injury.

For further information, please contact:

Lorraine Gwinnutt
Press & Parliamentary Manager
APIL
11 Castle Quay
Nottingham
NG7 1FW

or

Val Evans
Press & PR Officer
APIL
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
val.evans@apil.com

Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lorraine@apil.com