ABATEMENT — GUIDE

When asbestos testing is required

Separate home advice from school, workplace and demolition requirements.

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Start with the planned work

Tell the surveyor what will be cut, drilled, sanded, stripped or demolished. Include hidden layers and areas that trades need to reach. A survey for a sale may not cover a renovation. Ask whether the report covers the exact work area and material layers.

EPA says you usually cannot identify asbestos by sight. It advises an inspection by a trained and accredited asbestos professional when a home has damaged suspect materials or planned remodeling could disturb them. EPA does not recommend taking samples yourself. Leave suspect material alone while you arrange advice. This home guidance is not a federal requirement to test every house before sale. [EPA home guidance]

Know which rule applies

For facilities covered by the asbestos NESHAP, EPA describes a thorough inspection requirement before renovation or demolition. The federal residential exclusion has limits. Houses in a larger commercial or public demolition project can fall under the rule. Ask the delegated air agency to confirm coverage. Do not infer an exemption from a residential address. [EPA NESHAP]

AHERA applies to public school districts and non-profit schools. EPA describes an initial inspection and re-inspection of asbestos-containing material every three years, plus a management plan. This is a school rule. It is not a repeating inspection schedule for every home. [EPA school guidance]

Washington L&I says a good faith asbestos inspection by an AHERA-certified building inspector is required before work that could disturb suspect material, regardless of building age. Share the survey with the contractors bidding and working on the project. [Washington L&I]

Ask for a usable report

Request the inspected areas, inaccessible areas, material locations, sampling method, laboratory results and the inspector's credentials. Ask which areas remain unassessed. Keep the report with the project scope. If the scope changes, ask the inspector whether further assessment is needed.

For a Canadian project, start with the provincial authority. WorkSafeBC says not to assume a material is free of asbestos and to stop work when suspect asbestos is found. US federal rules do not establish a Canadian exemption. [WorkSafeBC]

Sources

All sources below were fetched and checked on 2026-11-10. This is the check date, not a claim about publication date.

- EPA home guidance, accessed 2026-11-10.
- EPA NESHAP, accessed 2026-11-10.
- EPA school guidance, accessed 2026-11-10.
- Washington L&I, accessed 2026-11-10.
- WorkSafeBC, accessed 2026-11-10.

Frequently asked questions

Does this guide replace a project assessment?

No. Confirm the scope and current requirements with the responsible authority and a qualified professional.