

# Health hazards: Asbestos, lead and more

## Does your contractor have the right credentials?

### Asbestos

Contractors working on home improvement/demolition projects must determine whether **asbestos-containing materials (ACM)** are present on the job site prior to the start of the project.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regulates removal and disposal of asbestos-containing materials. If asbestos-containing materials are identified, contractors must follow:

- Proper licensing (DEQ/active Construction Contractors Board license)
- DEQ notification
- Work practices (removal, handling and packaging)
- Disposal requirements

[DEQ's Oregon Administrative Rules \(OAR\) 340-248 outline asbestos requirements](#)

### Credentials

**Accredited asbestos inspector:** Generally, an accredited asbestos inspector must conduct an asbestos survey (sample collection) and produce an asbestos survey report that lists all asbestos-containing materials. This survey should identify the types of asbestos-containing materials such as vinyl flooring, floor tile, popcorn ceiling, thermal system insulation, etc. This report should determine friability (friable or non-friable).

Ask your contractor if they had the asbestos survey done and what it revealed. Ask about the plan for removing any asbestos-containing materials.

**Asbestos abatement contractor:** Only a DEQ-licensed asbestos abatement contractor is allowed to repair or remove (abate) friable ACM. This is the type of asbestos that easily releases asbestos fibers when crushed and thus poses the greatest risk to homeowners, workers, the public and the environment.

[Here is the list of DEQ-licensed asbestos abatement contractors approved to abate friable asbestos](#)

The DEQ recommends that a DEQ-licensed asbestos abatement contractor also perform non-friable asbestos abatement.

### More information

- [Learn more about asbestos at the DEQ asbestos web page.](#)

### Who to contact

For additional information about working with asbestos, visit the [Oregon DEQ](#) website.

# Lead

## Renovating an older home

Contractors that disturb painted surfaces in homes, child care facilities and schools built before 1978 must hold a special license and follow work practices that prevent lead contamination.

Common renovation activities that disturb lead-based paint, such as sanding, cutting, and replacing windows, can create hazardous lead dust and chips.

Home repairs that create even a small amount of lead dust are enough to poison your child and put your family at risk.

[EPA "The Lead-Safe Certified Guide to Renovate Right"](#) | [EPA "Remodelar Correctamente" \(Spanish\)](#). Contractors must to provide this pamphlet before any renovation on "target housing."

## Find a qualified Oregon contractor

If you need to hire a renovator or contractor, verify that the contractor holds a Lead-Based Paint Renovation license from the Construction Contractors Board.

Here is a [list by county of contractors](#) who are qualified in Oregon.

Lead-safe licensing for contractors

[Find information about how to be licensed to work on pre-1978 structures.](#)



## Who to contact

For additional information about working safely with lead-based paint, the [Oregon Health Authority](#) or [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) websites may provide useful information for property owners, property managers or Realtors.

# Radon

The Oregon Health Authority offers information about radon, including how residents can test a home themselves easily and inexpensively.

- Find frequently asked questions about radon [here](#).
- Learn more about the radon risk [here](#).

## Find radon experts

Contractors, home inspectors and other businesses are not required to be certified to provide radon services but some are.

**Radon measurement companies:** These businesses serve Oregon and have at least one radon measurement technician on staff who has been certified by the National Radon Proficiency Program ([NRPP](#)) or the National Radon Safety Board ([NRSB](#)).

**Radon mitigation companies:** These businesses serve Oregon and have at least one radon mitigation technician on staff who has been certified by the National Radon Proficiency Program (NRPP) or the National Radon Safety Board (NRSB).

# Mold

Federal and state agencies offer information about mold for homeowners, including why it's generally not helpful to test for mold and when you may be able to do cleanup yourself and when it might be best to seek professional help.

- [Oregon Health Authority information](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency information \(EPA\)](#)

If you decide to hire a professional after learning more about mold, check references and ask about their experience with mold removal. A special license is not required for mold cleanup.

## Air Ducts

Some homeowners ask whether they should have their air ducts cleaned to avoid a variety of contaminants. The EPA offers this information:

- [Should you have the air ducts in your home cleaned?](#)

## Who to contact

The [Oregon Health Authority](#) and the federal [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) have additional information. No special licenses are required.