

## What assistance is available?

DES has the authority to assist in the proper management of asbestos waste on your property, as established by Env-Wm 3900.

DES also provides certification/licensing to workers and contractors to enable them to investigate and remove or cover asbestos waste from your property.

In addition, DES provides periodic awareness training and education to property owners so that they can better identify and manage asbestos waste.

DES will work with you, the local health officer, and certified/licensed contractors to ensure that any asbestos waste discovered on your property does not present a health or environmental hazard.



*Covered and undisturbed asbestos buried in the ground poses little threat to you and the environment.*

## For More Information

The DES asbestos website contains photographs of various waste types at [www.des.nh.gov/sw/asbestos\\_1.htm](http://www.des.nh.gov/sw/asbestos_1.htm).

Asbestos Disposal Site Program  
Waste Management Division  
NH Department of Environmental Services  
PO Box 95  
Concord, NH 03302-0095  
(603) 271-7376  
[www.des.nh.gov/sw/asbestos\\_1.htm](http://www.des.nh.gov/sw/asbestos_1.htm)

Asbestos Management & Control Program  
Air Resources Division  
NH Department of Environmental Services  
PO Box 95  
Concord, NH 03302-0095  
(603) 271-1370  
[www.des.nh.gov/ard/asbestos.htm](http://www.des.nh.gov/ard/asbestos.htm)

Asbestos on the ground that is not covered or is allowed to be exposed to the environment poses a threat to you and your family's health, the environment and the general public.



# Asbestos in Your Backyard

How to Identify and  
Manage Asbestos  
Waste on Your  
Property



*Asbestos waste uncovered in a backyard.*

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Environmental Services

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the common name for a group of naturally occurring mineral fibers that are known for their high tensile strength and thermal insulating properties. It is commonly found in a variety of building construction materials and products.



*A partially buried rolled sheet of asbestos.*

## Why is asbestos a problem?

When asbestos is disturbed, it can break down into microscopic fibers that may become airborne. Once airborne, these fibers can be inhaled and trapped in the lungs, posing a health threat. Breathing asbestos can cause respiratory diseases including asbestosis, lung cancer, and mesothelioma, a fatal cancer of the chest cavity lining.

Disturbing asbestos material during activities such as landscaping, digging, excavating and gardening can expose you and your family to asbestos fibers by releasing them into the air or by contaminating clothing and equipment.

That's why it is important not to disturb the material further if you discover exposed asbestos.

**No safe level of asbestos exposure has been established.**

## What does asbestos waste look like?

Asbestos waste comes in a variety of forms, including pellets, spheres, whole sheets and scraps/fragments of sheets resembling "cement board." It may be gray, white, black, green or red in color.

After being in the soil for many years, it has a tendency to blend with its surroundings and can be hard to distinguish from clean soil, rocks or cement. "Baghouse" waste, which is a fine, dust-like material, can look like loam or fertile soil.



*Excavation of asbestos with various waste types and colors.*



*Looks like soil ... but it's not!*

## What do I do when I find asbestos waste?

**Do not disturb the material! Report the finding to your local health officer, who can provide further guidance.**

## How did asbestos get on my property?

Asbestos-containing materials, textiles and paper products were manufactured in New Hampshire with facilities located in Nashua, Meredith and Tilton. The Johns-Mansville Corporation located in Nashua provided property owners asbestos waste as "free fill." As a result, many residential, commercial, industrial and public properties throughout Nashua and Hudson were filled with asbestos waste. The waste may be present on the ground surface or buried. If you are not the original owner, asbestos waste may be buried without your knowing. Buried asbestos can be worked to the ground surface and exposed through frost action, erosion or other activities.



*Asbestos wastes were used to fill this wetlands.*

## How many sites in New Hampshire are contaminated with asbestos waste?

To date, 350 sites have been identified in New Hampshire that contain asbestos waste, and each year new sites are discovered. The Department of Environmental Services maintains a listing of all known asbestos contaminated sites. A list of these sites can be viewed at [www2.des.state.nh.us/gis/onestop/](http://www2.des.state.nh.us/gis/onestop/).