

## **Is Asbestos A Concern in My House?**

Asbestos is a general term that applies to a variety of naturally occurring mineral silicates, e.g. chrysotile, amosite, crocidolite, tremolite or any products composed of these minerals. In the old days, asbestos was referred to by the Greeks as the “miracle mineral” due to its softness and pliant properties as well as its ability to withstand heat, possesses high tensile strength, and moderate to good chemical resistance. The beneficial properties and abundance of asbestos make it ideal since the late 1800s for many diverse uses such as:

- (1) Insulation to pipes, fitting, boilers or interior structural components to prevent heat energy transfer or water condensation
- (2) Applied to surfaces such as acoustical plaster on ceilings, fireproofing materials
- (3) Miscellaneous such as brakes, clutches, floor covering, gaskets and cementitious materials.

With the advance of science and medical knowledge, asbestos is now known to be a health hazard. Inhalation of asbestos fibers over time may cause asbestosis, thickening of the lung linings, mesothelioma and cancer.

Asbestos containing material (ACM) is generally classified as friable and nonfriable. Friable ACM contains more than 1% asbestos and can be “crumbled, pulverized, or reduced to powder by hand pressure when dry” and is thought to release fibers into the air more readily.

### **HOUSING AREA**

Continuous sampling and monitoring of asbestos has been conducted in the housing and Navy Sembawang area since 2003. No friable asbestos was found since the initial survey. Transite and some asbestos containing material were identified in car park roofing structures, portions of the Medical Aid Station roofing, some inner wall boards, roof top access panels and some floor tiles. Nearly all of the identified structures have been replaced and those that have not been replaced are under continual monitoring and reinspections.

Under OPNAVINST 5100.23G, Asbestos Control, DoD policy is not to remove installed asbestos containing materials, which are in good condition, for the sole purpose of eliminating asbestos.

Asbestos fibers can only be released if broken or deteriorated due to weathering. Concern may arise if you break an ACM wall board or if you decide to sand or polish some ACM floor tiles (both highly unlikely events).

### **IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL CONCERNS OR WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION....**

Please contact Regional Safety, at 6750-2535 or Environmental at 6750-2052.