

Asbestos Policy & Procedure

1. Purpose & Introduction

This policy and procedure sets out Octavia's commitment and approach to ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that residents, contractors and Octavia staff are not exposed to risks to their health from asbestos materials in Octavia properties, including offices and other buildings used by Octavia.

Within this policy and procedure, asbestos materials means building components and fittings which contain asbestos and risk to health from asbestos refers to risk from inhalation of respirable asbestos fibres.

2. Principles of Asbestos Management within Octavia

Octavia aims to obtain and hold information concerning asbestos in its properties which is so far as reasonably practicable complete and accurate. Octavia will use that information to:

- Avoid, so far as reasonably practicable, the exposure of residents to asbestos fibres in their homes, in keeping with Octavia's duty of care.
- Minimise the risk of asbestos being disturbed during maintenance and building work in properties, in particular by providing information to contractors and other parties in accordance with the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2007.
- Manage risks from asbestos materials in communal areas, in residents' homes and in other properties occupied by Octavia, following the principles set out in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- Ensure that work to remove asbestos materials is carried out in accordance with best practice so as to minimise risk of exposure to asbestos fibre.

Octavia does not have primary responsibility for managing asbestos within its leasehold and commercial properties but will aim to co-operate with leaseholders and commercial tenants in the identification and management of any asbestos in those properties.

The following three categories of asbestos materials have been identified in Octavia's residential properties.

2.1 Asbestos Materials which have the potential to release fibre under everyday conditions

Materials such as unencapsulated or damaged asbestos insulation board can release fibre under everyday conditions. Octavia's aim is to identify any such material and arrange for it to be removed, if practicable, or if it is appropriate to do so made safe by encapsulation. Materials which readily accessible and therefore liable to damage will normally be removed rather than encapsulated.

Encapsulated materials other than those inside residents' homes will be subject to inspection at least annually to confirm that they remain in safe condition.

2.2 Asbestos Materials which have the potential to release fibre if damaged during maintenance or other works

Materials which could release fibre if damaged include asbestos cement components which are located inside homes and encapsulated asbestos insulation board which is located in communal areas where damage under everyday conditions is not reasonably foreseeable. If it is not reasonably practicable to remove these materials, Octavia will aim to provide estate- or block-specific warning information to residents of homes which contain the materials. Arrangements will also be made to alert contractors working in such properties to the presence of these materials.

2.3 Asbestos Materials which release little or no fibre if disturbed

The majority of asbestos-containing materials in Octavia properties will release little or no fibre if disturbed. These include vinyl floor tiles and adhesives, composite materials such as toilet cisterns and sink pads and decorative coatings such as artex. These materials will be removed or repaired if damaged and residents will be given general advice about the possible presence of the materials in their homes and regarding action to avoid damage.

Where vinyl floor tiles and other low-fibre release materials are removed from properties, contractors will be required to implement the necessary environmental disposal arrangements.

3. Information Management

So far as reasonably practicable, Octavia will aim to identify asbestos materials which are present in its properties and to maintain accurate information on the nature and location of those asbestos materials. This does not apply to properties built after 1999 (the date when the use of asbestos was prohibited), in which asbestos materials are not foreseeably present or to private areas of leasehold properties, where Octavia has no asbestos management responsibilities.

To obtain information about asbestos materials in communal areas of buildings, including offices, Octavia has commissioned accredited consultants to carry out management surveys of all properties built up to 1999. In cases of doubt about the accuracy of surveys carried out, repeat surveys are to be commissioned.

Information about asbestos materials in domestic areas of tenanted properties, i.e. inside flats, houses etc, is based on surveys, both management surveys and surveys in the course of refurbishment works, of a representative sample of flats or houses in each property or development, so as to provide reliable information about the likely location of asbestos materials in all flats and houses. Surveys within flats and houses will normally cover all accessible parts of the property.

All requests for additional asbestos surveys are made via the Planning and Performance Officer. The extent to which completed surveys of flats and houses provide adequate information about the presence of asbestos materials will be periodically reviewed and additional surveys commissioned where practicable in order to improve the availability of information about asbestos materials which may be present.

As noted above, Octavia encourages and assists its commercial tenants to commission accredited consultants to carry out a management survey for asbestos in their property. Octavia requests that commercial tenants provide Octavia with a copy of their asbestos survey reports.

3.1 Survey Records

Electronic copies of all asbestos surveys are retained by Asset Management under the control of the Planning & Performance Officer.

Copies of these survey records are accessible by all Octavia staff and are made available to contractors. Advice on the interpretation of asbestos survey reports is available from the Planning and Performance Officer and the Health & Safety Team.

3.2 Asbestos Databases

The Planning and Performance Officer maintains a register of all properties with details of surveys which have been carried out and dates of inspections in communal areas where these are required. More detailed information on whether asbestos has been identified in properties is recorded on QLx. QLx is also used to record the inspections which are carried out.

In all cases of doubt regarding database asbestos records, the original survey report should be consulted and/or a fresh survey commissioned.

4. Managing Asbestos Risks

4.1 Inspection of Asbestos Materials

Asbestos materials in communal areas of properties which could present a risk from the release of fibres are subject to periodic inspections by a competent person. The Planning and Performance Officer maintains records of asbestos inspections as above and initiates any remedial works which are identified as necessary.

4.2 Asbestos Management Plans

Where asbestos materials which present a foreseeable risk of fibre release are identified within non-residential premises where Octavia staff work, an Asbestos Management Plan will be prepared covering groups of premises or single buildings as appropriate and specifying the arrangements in place for managing risks from asbestos in those premises.

Asbestos Management Plans will also be prepared for communal areas of residential properties where there is a foreseeable risk of fibre release from asbestos materials.

For properties where only low risk asbestos materials are present which do not present a foreseeable risk of fibre release, the arrangements for managing asbestos risks are as specified within this Policy.

5. Work by Contractors

Octavia will make information from its asbestos databases available to all contractors whose work could result in disturbance of asbestos materials.

For contractors carrying out responsive work, either the whole of the asbestos database or the relevant parts of it will be provided to the contractors in electronic format.

For planned works projects, an assessment will be made of the information which should be provided to the contractor before works commence. Where a CDM Co-ordinator is appointed they should contribute to this assessment. Any additional surveys which are necessary will be organised either by or on behalf of Octavia and will, so far as practicable, be completed before any work begins on the project.

Contractors appointed to carry out planned works which have the potential to disturb asbestos materials will be required to provide a written undertaking regarding the measures which they will implement to avoid any risk from asbestos in the building. The undertaking should include all of the following which are relevant:

- Training of workers in asbestos awareness;
- Provision of information to workers about known or presumed asbestos materials;
- Competent supervision of works;
- Arrangements for ceasing work and making safe if suspect asbestos materials are encountered.

These requirements will apply to all planned works projects except in buildings constructed after 1999 or where an asbestos survey has concluded that the property contains no asbestos materials which could be disturbed by the works.

6. Licensed Work with Asbestos Materials

Where licensed work is to be carried out in an Octavia property, the Planning and Procurement Manager must ensure that a Project Co-ordinator is appointed for the works to ensure that the roles of contractors, consultants, housing staff and other parties are co-ordinated. The role of Project Co-ordinator may be taken by a competent external consultant, in which case they must provide progress and compliance reports to the Planning and Procurement Manager.

All licensed asbestos removal work must be supervised by competent consultants engaged directly by Octavia. The consultant will report to the Project Co-ordinator to ensure that:

- Work does not begin or continue unless all necessary precautions are in place: and
- Work areas are not returned to normal occupation until inspected and tested by the consultants and certified as safe.

So far as practicable, all licensed asbestos removal work will be carried out by contractors appointed directly by Octavia. The contractor must provide Octavia with a copy of their method statement for the asbestos work.

7. Other Work with Asbestos Materials

It is Octavia's policy that all removal of asbestos materials from its buildings will be undertaken by a licensed asbestos contractor, regardless of whether asbestos legislation requires that a licensed contractor is employed for that class of work. Octavia will place the following requirements on the contractor:

- a) The contractor must provide Octavia with a copy of their method statement for the asbestos work.
- b) The contractor must provide a Completion Certificate for each area where works with asbestos have been carried out in the format at Appendix 2. This will include a declaration that a competent manager or supervisor has inspected each area where asbestos has been disturbed during the work and that all asbestos debris has been removed.
- c) Where air-sampling or other testing for asbestos is required, this will be carried out by competent consultants engaged directly by Octavia.
- d) The contractor must obtain consignment notes which demonstrate that asbestos materials have been correctly disposed of and make copies of consignment notes available to Octavia on request.

8. Information for Residents

Octavia will provide general information for residents about asbestos and precautions via the website and other appropriate media. A statement prepared for this purpose is at the Appendix. Where particular asbestos materials are identified which may present a risk to residents in an individual property or estate, information specific to the location and the risk may be prepared and distributed to residents.

Enquiries from individual residents about asbestos materials which may be present in their homes will be passed to the Planning and Performance Officer, who will review relevant survey reports and prepare advice for the resident.

9. Responding to Incidents

In the event of any incident where asbestos is or may have been disturbed, the Planning and Procurement Manager must be informed in all cases. The Planning and Performance Officer and the Health & Safety Team must also be informed and the appointed asbestos consultants should be contacted to visit and assess levels of contamination.

In cases where asbestos is or may have been disturbed inside a resident's home, the relevant neighbourhood or housing manager should also be consulted and agreement reached with the Health & Safety Team and with Asset Management regarding the information to be provided to the resident(s) and regarding re-housing and/or other support to be provided.

10. Managers' Responsibilities

Operational responsibility for managing asbestos risks within Octavia rests with the Director of Asset Management, who will ensure that adequate resources are allocated and who will review the implementation of this policy and procedure at least once a year.

The Assistant Director of Asset Management, the Planning and Procurement Manager and the Building Services and Energy Manager are responsible for ensuring that:

- Surveyors and other staff understand their responsibilities under this procedure and are adequately trained to carry out their responsibilities.
- Specialist asbestos contractors and consultants are accredited and licensed as required by legislation and carry out their work for Octavia competently.
- The work of other contractors is planned and supervised to ensure compliance with this procedure.

In addition the Planning and Procurement Manager is responsible for ensuring that asbestos records are maintained so as to be accurate and accessible by Octavia staff and made available as necessary to contractors.

The Health & Safety Advisor provides technical advice on asbestos management within Octavia and contributes to asbestos management reviews.

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos materials were used in buildings throughout the twentieth century, particularly from the 1950s to the 1980s. No asbestos has been used in buildings in the UK since 1999.

What is the Difficulty / Problem?

Some asbestos building materials which contain asbestos can be damaged and release dust in the form of asbestos fibres, which can be harmful to health if people breathe them in; but most of the materials which were used in housing contain only small amounts of asbestos and do not usually release any fibres. For example some vinyl floor tiles contain asbestos but fibres are not released even if the tiles are cracked and broken.

What is Octavia doing?

Octavia is committed to managing the risks from asbestos materials which are present in its buildings and almost all the materials which can give rise to a health risk have been removed from the properties. Octavia makes sure that any remaining materials which could present a risk are kept in a safe condition so that they can be removed without danger when properties are empty.

What should you do?

As an Octavia resident, there may be materials which contain asbestos in your home if it was built in 1999 or before but these materials will not release any asbestos fibre under normal circumstances. Asbestos may have been used in the manufacture of vinyl floor tiles or plastic toilet cisterns or included in artex or similar decorative coatings applied to ceilings etc. You should treat all such items as if they contain asbestos and take care not to damage such items - do not drill or sand them.

More Information

If you would like more information about materials containing asbestos which may be in your property, please contact your neighbourhood manager.

There is also information on asbestos at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/building.htm>

Appendix 2

Asbestos Works Completion Certificate

To be completed for all work with asbestos materials except where a 4-stage clearance procedure is completed by an accredited and signed by the contractor's authorised manager or supervisor

Property Address		Property Reference (UPRN)	
Contractor Company Name		Name of Manager / Supervisor	
Date Work Started		Date Work Completed	
Room/Area Covered by this Completion Certificate (A separate Certificate is required for each room or area)			
Type(s) of asbestos material (circle)	Asbestos Insulation Board Asbestos Cement Flooring (e.g. tiles) Other Composite Materials Other Material (specify)		
Description of Work (e.g. remove floor tiles, encapsulate asbestos cement inside cupboard, etc.)			
<u>COMPLETION CERTIFICATE</u>			
			Yes
			No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All asbestos materials have been removed from the Room/Area specified 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encapsulated materials are fully covered and labelled 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All surfaces in the Room/Area are clean and free from any dust and debris 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All asbestos waste has been removed from the property 			
Comments:			
Explanation must be given here if the answer to any of the above is 'No'			
<u>DECLARATION:</u>			
I confirm that I have personally inspected the specified area and all asbestos materials have been removed or made safe as specified above.			
Signed:		Date:	
Name (Print)		Time:	