

Asbestos Factsheet: Thermoplastic Vinyl Floor Tiles

Thermoplastic (TPE) or thermoplastic vinyl floor tiles in the UK often contain chrysotile (white) asbestos, particularly if installed between the 1950s and mid-1980s.

Commonly 9x9 inches, these durable, brittle tiles were popular in kitchens, hallways, and public buildings. If in good condition, they are generally safe, but they frequently sit on black, asbestos-containing adhesive (mastic).

Key Facts About Asbestos in TPE and thermoplastic vinyl floor tiles:

- **Asbestos Content:** TPE floor tiles often contain white asbestos (chrysotile), usually at a concentration of 2–5%, although some older tiles may contain up to 25%.
- **"Non-Friable" Nature:** Because they are heavily bonded with thermoplastic or bitumen resins, these tiles are considered a "low-risk" asbestos-containing material. They only pose a significant danger if they are damaged, broken, sanded, or drilled, which can release asbestos fibres.
- **Common Locations:** They are often found hidden beneath newer flooring, such as modern carpet or vinyl, in properties built before the late 1980s.
- **Adhesive Risks:** The black tar-like adhesive ("bitumen bond" or "mastic") used to stick the tiles to the floor may also contain asbestos, even if the tile itself does not.
- **Identification:** It is impossible to identify them through visual inspection alone; lab testing is the only definitive method.

Thermoplastic (TPE) or thermoplastic vinyl floor tiles in the UK were used as durable floor tiles, Due to their affordability and hard-wearing nature, they were extensively used.

Chrysotile or White Asbestos



Thermoplastic TPE and Thermoplastic Vinyl Floor Tiles

Historically, thermoplastic and thermoplastic vinyl floor tiles were used for high-traffic and heavy-use areas because of their exceptional durability, low cost, and fire resistance. In the UK, they were a standard choice for both public and private buildings from the **1950s to the late 1980s**.

Common Historic Uses

- **Public and Institutional Buildings:** They were everywhere in schools, hospitals, and libraries because they could withstand constant foot traffic and were easy to clean.
- **Social and Council Housing:** Due to their affordability and hardwearing nature, they were extensively used throughout local authority properties.
- **Domestic Utility Areas:** In private homes, they were most commonly installed in kitchens, bathrooms, hallways, and utility rooms where water resistance was a priority.
- **Communal Areas:** They were frequently used in high-occupancy zones like stairwells, entrance halls, and corridors.

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What Hjaltland Housing Association are doing to Keep You Safe:

- We carry out surveys on identified properties and monitor and maintain asbestos in these properties.
- Where works are required, we assess the asbestos information we have for the property and where required carry out a further asbestos survey to ensure as far as possible asbestos is identified and taken into account when planning.
- Where day to day repairs are required, we provide Hjaltland Housing Association employees and contractors with the associated asbestos information for that property.
- We ensure our employees and contractors undertake regular asbestos awareness training.
- Our aim is to remove all asbestos from a property between tenancies, however where this is not possible a full management inspection will be carried out at the property.
- We maintain a register of all asbestos identified and assumed and where removals have taken place to ensure the effective management and monitoring of the asbestos safety process.
- If your home is known to have, or is at risk of having asbestos, we will let you know and tell you what you need to do to either ensure asbestos is not disturbed or have it removed.

Thermoplastic (TPE) will be inspected every 3 years.

If you are concerned you can contact us on **01595 694986** or by emailing **mail@hjaltland.org**.

Why They Were Chosen?

Durability: They were designed to last for decades without significant wear.

Fire & Heat Resistance: The addition of asbestos fibres provided a high degree of fire protection.

Aesthetics: Manufacturers offered over 20 different colours, allowing for vibrant, patterned floors in otherwise functional spaces.

Ease of Maintenance: Their non-porous surface made them resistant to stains, bacteria, and chemicals

What YOU can do to Keep Yourself Safe:

Contact us before undertaking any DIY work which would disturb the fabric of the building. Particularly if you plan to remove, sand, drill or scrape any thermoplastic vinyl or floor tiles.

If the material is damaged

If you have material in your home that is damaged, flaking or releasing fibres and you are worried it might be asbestos please call the Association immediately.

If you are worried about asbestos, please call the Association immediately. We will send a Technical Officer to inspect the material and take necessary actions. If we find there is a problem we will arrange for the damage to be repaired or the asbestos to be removed and disposed of safely.