

# Libby and Troy Residents

## Reducing Asbestos Exposure To Vermiculite or Asbestos In or Around Your Home or Business

### Vermiculite in Libby & Troy

Vermiculite was used in a variety of forms for decades in and around Libby homes as a soil additive, a lightweight aggregate for concrete, and attic insulation, among other things.

If vermiculite is present, it may contain Libby asbestos. Vermiculite will continue to be discovered from time to time even after a cleanup has been completed at a property. It was not possible for EPA to remove (or to even know about) all the vermiculite in the area. Vermiculite may be left in sealed walls, home foundations, and other relatively inaccessible areas.

Some encounters with vermiculite will be small and may include:

- **minor renovations** – removing old carpets, installing ceiling fans, or removing wall outlets
- **minor landscaping** – replacing bedding for plants and mowing

There will be times when a large pocket of vermiculite is discovered. Such situations may include:

- **intrusive digging** – septic systems, sprinklers, and water lines.
- **major renovations** – taking walls down, putting in windows, etc.
- **fires** – fire-fighting and subsequent cleanup.

### Protect Yourself

Hiring a licensed asbestos contractor to clean up vermiculite spilled while doing home improvements is recommended to minimize your exposure.



(Left) Raw vermiculite in soils. (Right) When heated, vermiculite exfoliates (or pops), forming a lightweight material ideal for packing, insulation, and as a soil additive.

### Take Steps to Avoid Exposure

- For a small quantity, such as a handful of vermiculite, wet wipe it and throw it away. For a small quantity of vermiculite in surface soil, such as a very isolated area or a few random flakes, we recommend you wet it and have it removed by contacting the **Asbestos Resource Program (ARP)**. **If possible, leave it alone.** If the material is buried, keep it that way – it's better buried than at the surface.
- HEPA filter vacuums are effective on small quantities of vermiculite indoors. **Never vacuum vermiculite with a regular vacuum.** HEPA vacuums and wet wiping can be used periodically to remove any small amounts of asbestos containing dust that is introduced into your home or to vacuum dust from previously inaccessible locations such as under recently removed carpets, appliances, and furniture.
- For larger quantities of vermiculite, such as what you may find in a breached wall, do not disturb the material. **Do not vacuum large amounts of vermiculite – even with a HEPA vacuum.**
- Mowing or rototilling in yards and gardens, where vermiculite is found may cause asbestos to become airborne. If possible, sprinkle your yard or garden with water before mowing or tilling.
- If you encounter a large amount of vermiculite in soil that cannot be avoided, such as when it was used around pipes, around other structures, or as bulk fill – you may have sparkling soil – **do not disturb the material. Contact ARP for appropriate evaluation and assistance.**
- If you are planning on remodeling your home, find out if there is vermiculite in the attic or walls, or any of the materials that will be taken out, disturbed, or are likely to create dust. You can call the ARP (406-291-5335), if you are unsure.

**You should also be aware of specific regulations regarding remodeling, demolition, and disposal that may impact your work, especially big projects.**



**Lincoln County Asbestos Resource Program (ARP)**  
**(406) 291-5335**

**For more information visit: [lcarp.org](http://lcarp.org)**

# Libby Asbestos is Toxic

It should be avoided or handled with extreme care. Exposure to Libby Amphibole asbestos has resulted in disease in workers and non-workers who have had contact with contaminated materials. Take care not to bring any contaminated clothing or material back to your home or business. Treat any asbestos containing material as regulated material and comply with all state and local regulations. The health risk from exposure to all asbestos depends greatly on the amount of asbestos in the material you are disturbing and how long the exposure lasts. **There is no known threshold risk level for asbestos-related materials, and any exposure will increase the risk of asbestos-related disease.**

*If you take the basic precautions outlined in this fact sheet, your risk from exposure will be less.*

**RENTERS – You have a right to know about any adverse conditions at your rental.**

**Ask your landlord about the presence of vermiculite. If you do not receive the information you request, contact the Lincoln County Asbestos Resource Program.**

## Common dust or surgical masks are not effective against asbestos fibers!



**Wearing a respirator mask with a P-100 fine particulate HEPA filter is the best way to avoid breathing asbestos fibers. However, they must be used properly or exposure may still occur.**

For more information on respirator requirements, visit OSHA's website:  
[www.osha.gov/respiratory-protection](http://www.osha.gov/respiratory-protection)

Learn about the risks of asbestos exposure and basic precautions by reviewing the Best Management Practices (BMP) resource fact sheets available at the **Lincoln County Asbestos Resource Program** or on the website: **lcarp.org**

- **Reducing Asbestos Exposure** – *How to reduce exposure to asbestos when renovating or excavating*
- **Lincoln County Do-It-Yourselfers** – *What to do if you find vermiculite or asbestos*
- **Contractors & Tradesmen Working Outdoors** – *What to do if you find vermiculite or asbestos*
- **Demolition Activities** – *Precautionary steps to take before tearing down structures*
- **Contractors & Tradesmen Working Indoors** – *What to do if you find vermiculite or asbestos*
- **13 Simple Steps to Protect from Libby Asbestos** – *How to reduce exposure to asbestos*

## Who Can I Contact With Questions About Asbestos?



**ARP  
HOTLINE  
(406) 291-5335**



**Montana  
Asbestos Control  
Program  
(406) 444-5300**

The DEQ or ARP might send personnel out to inspect a situation involving vermiculite or LA. That guidance might include advising the owner to allow a licensed asbestos contractor or inspector to take samples, conduct cleanup, or take other special measures to reduce the risk of asbestos exposure. A list of licensed contractors and inspectors can be provided by contacting DEQ or ARP.

Montana law requires that employers hire a licensed inspector to determine if asbestos is present before doing any work. Asbestos that is not associated with the Libby vermiculite mine is still regulated by the Montana DEQ. If non-Libby asbestos is found, it should be dealt with according to Montana regulations. Explore Montana DEQ's Asbestos web site at: [www.deq.mt.gov/Asbestos](http://www.deq.mt.gov/Asbestos)