



# Q&A for Homeowners Asbestos Testing

## Q. Is your lab accredited?

A. Yes. We are accredited by NVLAP and various other state, federal, and private accreditation agencies for asbestos testing, including AIHA, A2LA, NY State, TX DOH, and CA-ELAP as required in our laboratory locations. We maintain all applicable accreditations for asbestos testing in the U.S. states and provinces in Canada. You can view our current accreditation certificates on our website, [www.emsl.com](http://www.emsl.com).

## Q. Are there any online reviews about your service?

A. Yes. Our customers have posted reviews about us online.

## Q. Where should I submit my sample for testing?

A. After placing your sample in a ziplock plastic bag and labeling it with a sample ID or location on the bag, you may drop off the sample at any of the over 40 testing locations throughout the United States and Canada; please visit [www.emsl.com](http://www.emsl.com) for a map of local locations or mail samples to the labs listed below:

### Canada samples:

EMSL Canada, Inc.  
2756 Slough Street  
Mississauga, ON, L4T 1G3

### United States samples:

EMSL Analytical, Inc.  
200 Route 130 North  
Cinnaminson, NJ 08077

## Q. Can I drop off samples in person?

A. Yes, you can drop samples off at the over 40 lab locations in the United States and Canada anytime between 9:00am to 5:00pm. After normal business hours, you may drop off the samples through the mail slot in our front door or drop box outside (labs have different options).

## Q. What Payment Methods do You Accept?

A. We accept credit card payment.

## Q. Will my test results be confidential, or is your company required to report the results to any regulatory or government agencies?

A. Your data is confidential to you and will not be provided to any person, agency, local EPA, state, city, or company. You are the only person who receives the lab results



**Q. How will I get the lab report?**

A. Your laboratory report will be provided by email.

**Q. Can I use your report to remove the asbestos containing materials from my home?**

A. Although there is no federal ban in the U.S. on homeowners removing asbestos in a single family dwelling, we highly recommend the use of a professional removal company. It is imperative to check your local regulations first, but generally if it is a renovation project in a single family home removal may be done by the homeowner (you may not hire unlicensed personnel to do it for you). In addition, you are not allowed to dispose of the asbestos containing material as regular trash, but are required to take the material to a hazardous waste site. Asbestos exposure should always be limited and safety precautions must be taken. There are websites with instructions for homeowners who want to do the removal themselves.

If it is a demolition project, most localities require a report generated by a permit from a Certified Asbestos Consultant (CAC). Same thing applies for projects on properties that are public places, like churches or schools. Please check your local regulations.

**Q. Can I use your report to hire a contractor to remove asbestos containing materials from my home?**

A. You are limited to licensed Asbestos Abatement Contractors; General Contractors are not allowed. In most localities, Abatement Contractors accept reports which are generated by accredited laboratories, like EMSL, from samples taken by homeowners. So, yes, you may use our report.

However, there could be localities (for example, Los Angeles County) that require Abatement Contractors to only accept reports generated by a Certified Asbestos Consultant (CAC). In other words, in some counties, the rules of demolition jobs and public places apply for simple renovation projects in private homes. Initially, you hire a Certified Asbestos Consultant who takes the samples to an accredited laboratory, like EMSL. After you get a report from the CAC, then you can shop around for an Abatement Contractor. Because hiring a CAC is expensive, it might still be worth it for you to send samples to EMSL yourself. If your samples test negative for asbestos, then, of course, a CAC would not be needed.

Regulations, like the ones in Los Angeles county, are not common. But you should check with your city to be sure.

**Q. What if my samples contain no asbestos? Can I use your report to hire a contractor?**

A. Yes

**Q. What is the difference between your Asbestos Test Kit and Asbestos in Dust Test Kit?**

A. The Asbestos Test Kit allows you to test a building material. Our Asbestos in Dust Test Kit allows you to test settled dust on floors and other surfaces that may be contaminated with dust from post renovation and construction activity.

**Q. Is asbestos toxic?**

A. When you disturb an Asbestos Containing Material (ACM), it releases asbestos fibers that can damage your lungs.

**Q. How much of the sample does the laboratory need for analysis?**

A. Following safety protocols, the laboratory needs about one square inch of material for proper analysis. Please note that many times suspect material may contain multiple samples that can potentially contain asbestos. For example if you are worried about your floor tile, it may be the floor tile and or the mastic (glue) that tests positive. The EPA requires the reporting of each layer.





### Q. When did they stop using asbestos in materials?

A. Asbestos is still being used today in building material products.

### Q. What material can contain asbestos?

A. Below is a list of the common asbestos contain material, but it is important to check any material that you are working with for asbestos content:

Floor Tiles: *Ensure that if there is mastic on the back of the tile, a pea size amount can be scraped off for analysis.*

Popcorn Ceiling: *If scraping from a ceiling, a teaspoons worth of material is needed.*

Vinyl Flooring (sheet flooring, linoleum)

Ceramic tiles

Grout

Caulk

Glazing

Pipe wrap

Boiler insulation

Gaskets

House trap

House singles

Paint

Sheetrock: *It is recommended to sample close to the seam of two pieces of Sheetrock as the joint compound used to blend the seam may contain asbestos.*

Insulation – Fiberglass

Insulation – Blown In

Insulation – Vermiculite: *If present in an attic, it is best to sample from the bottom as the asbestos in this type of material is known to settle.*

Roofing: *Roofing may have different layers, and flashing is known to be a suspect material.*

Etc.

### Q. I am sampling and see two different floor tiles stacked. What should I test?

A. There are many regulations regarding asbestos analysis. Many samples will be sampled and have multiple layers of material, each layer must be tested and invoiced accordingly as separate samples. In your example there are multiple floor tiles layered on top of one another, there may also be multiple layers of mastic holding the tiles together. In this case you need to know if any of the layers are considered asbestos containing, therefore there will be multiple layers to the one sample that should be submitted to the laboratory for analysis.

#### Potential layered samples:

As a general rule, EMSL will treat any sample manufactured as a product to be a single sample. For example, linoleum consists of a vinyl layer and a backing layer, analysis will be performed on both material but only one result will be reported. Taking a minimum of three samples is recommended by EPA

**POPCORN CEILING:** One or two materials (material 1: paint coating, material 2: foamy interior) – This will be billed as two samples.

**WALLBOARD:** A wall system can consist of multiple layers (1-4), the Sheetrock, joint compound, wall tape, and texture. If any layers contain asbestos, it must be reported and charged as separate layer

**ROOFING:** Is another sample that tends to have multiple layers, any of which can contain asbestos. Roofing can also yield different results from different areas of the roof therefore multiple samples are recommended.

**FLOOR TILE:** Two materials (material 1: tile, material 2: mastic)





**VERMICULITE:** One material (Note: NYS does not allow the testing of Vermiculite Loose Insulation for asbestos content and it must be assumed positive.)

**Q. How do I pack the sample for shipping?**

A. Place the sample in a ziplock plastic bag, seal tight and place in a shipping envelope to send to our laboratory.

**Q. Will the test results show the percentage (%) of asbestos in my sample?**

A. Yes. We report the type of asbestos found and the percentage (%)

**Q. What is an “acceptable” asbestos limit?**

A. The U.S. EPA defines a material with greater than 1% (>1%) to be asbestos containing, however local regulations can supersede this regulation. In addition, each of the Canadian Provinces have varied defined actions levels.

**Q. Can this kit be used to analyze home garden soil?**

A. No, however we can test soil for asbestos. Contact us for details and instructions.

**Q. Wondering with mail in asbestos sample kits if results are positive is it reported to their local EPA or state/city office?**

A. The results are only reported to you.

**Q. Can the kit be bought in a store?**

A. These kits can be acquired on our online store at [www.EMSLTestKits.com](http://www.EMSLTestKits.com) and mailed to you.

**Q. Do you receive a report with test results so I can use report for local government?**

A. Yes, you may share the results with whomever you choose.

**Q. How accurate is the test?**

A. Asbestos can best be identified by an accredited lab with properly trained laboratory technicians. Our laboratory has been identifying asbestos since 1981 (over 40 years) and is accredited and certified by many state, federal, government, and private accrediting agencies.

**Q. Is EMSL accredited by every state that requires certification for testing asbestos samples?**

A. Yes

**Q. I want to knock down an old (1909) plaster wall. Will this test kit give me results for the plaster?**

A. If you submit the plaster sample, we can test it for asbestos.

**Q. Can the test kit be used to collect a sample of dust (if sample is large enough), and will the lab be able to test the dust sample?**

A. For dust samples, use our Asbestos in Dust Test Kit. If you are testing building materials for asbestos, use our Asbestos Test Kit.

**Q. Do I cut a piece of ceiling insulation and send it in?**

A. Avoid creating and breathing dust while taking the sample. Place it in a ziplock bag and send it for testing. Clean any dust left behind with a wet wipe and dispose of properly.

**Q. Can this kit test a drywall sample for asbestos?**

A. Our Asbestos Test Kit works for all building materials you are looking to test.





**Q. Would I be able to use this kit for vermiculite attic insulation?**

A. Our Vermiculite Attic Insulation Test Kit can be requested for this situation. (Note: NYS does not allow the testing of Vermiculite Loose Insulation for asbestos content and it must be assumed positive.)

**Q. Can this be used to test asbestos siding?**

A. Yes, the Asbestos Test Kit can be used to test siding.

**Q. What will I do when I get the kit? Do I tear up part of the vinyl? If so, how much do I need? If the vinyl is glued down, how do I remove it?**

A. One square inch of sample will suffice. Use a utility knife to cut out a one square inch of the material and place it in a ziplock plastic bag. Use a wet wipe to wipe dust and dispose of properly. In this situation, the vinyl and the glue (mastic) will be analyzed for asbestos and charged at two samples.

**Q. Do we have to include the location/address from where I took the sample?**

A. No, however you may want to. Results are confidential to only you.

**Q. Does this kit check the air to see if you have any airborne asbestos?**

A. Asbestos dust settles on surfaces over time. If there is a dusty area, you can use our Asbestos in Dust Test Kit to test the settled dust.

**Q. It seems to me that if I don't know if something has asbestos I should leave it alone until I know?**

A. Testing is the way to find out if it has asbestos.

**Q. Will this kit work for testing for asbestos on Pop-Corn ceilings?**

A. You may use the Asbestos Test Kit to test for asbestos in Pop-Corn ceilings.

**Q. Is this a do-it-yourself test kit?**

A. The kit allows you to collect and submit a sample for testing by our laboratory.

**Q. Does the fee for testing cover more than one sample?**

A. No. The fee covers only one sample. Additional samples or layers in a sample will be charged in addition.

**Q. If the area you are concerned about has two different types of material can you send a sample of both in one kit?**

A. Simply place the two different types of material in separate plastic bags and submit to lab for testing. This will be charged as two samples.

**Q. If I suspect ceiling tiles to contain asbestos, what is the sample size I must submit?**

A. A one square inch sample placed in a ziplock plastic bag will suffice.

**Q. Can this asbestos test kit be used to determine if loose fill insulation contains asbestos?**

A. You can request our Vermiculite Insulation Test Kit for this situation. (Note: NYS does not allow the testing of Vermiculite Loose Insulation for asbestos content and it must be assumed positive.)

**Q. How long does it take to get lab results?**

A. You choose the turnaround from three hours to two weeks.

