



# Handling Flood-Damaged Vermiculite Insulation



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This fact sheet contains information about managing and disposing of vermiculite insulation that may contain asbestos

As you clean up your homes and businesses, you may need to remove flood-damaged insulation. Some buildings and homes in North Dakota are insulated with vermiculite insulation. If you have vermiculite insulation, you should assume this material may contain asbestos and be aware of steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from exposure to asbestos.

## How can I tell if my insulation is made from vermiculite?

Vermiculite insulation is a pebble-like, pour-in product and is usually gray-brown or silver-gold in color.

## How can I tell if my vermiculite insulation contains asbestos?

You should assume that your vermiculite insulation contains asbestos. Here are some pictures of vermiculite insulation:



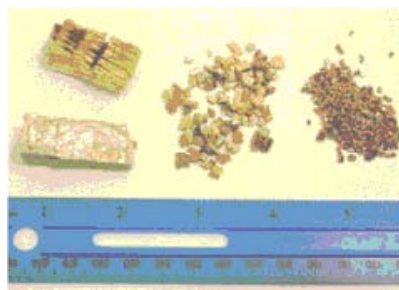
Typical vermiculite insulation



Vermiculite insulation between attic joists



Vermiculite insulation particle size relative to paper clip



Different sizes of vermiculite particles



Typical vermiculite insulation

## **What should I do if I have flood-damaged vermiculite insulation in my home that needs to be removed?**

Disturbing vermiculite insulation could potentially release asbestos fibers into the air. Removal of vermiculite insulation could result in asbestos contamination in your home. To make sure that removal of the flood-damaged vermiculite insulation is done safely, hire a professional asbestos removal contractor. Certified asbestos contractors are required to ensure they properly remove the asbestos without causing additional contamination. To find the name of a local asbestos removal contractor in your state, please go to the state map on EPA's asbestos web site at: <http://epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/regioncontact2.html>. Your state environmental agency can confirm that the company's credentials are current.

## **If I must disturb flood-damaged vermiculite insulation, how can I reduce exposure?**

Please make every effort not to disturb the insulation. If you must disturb it, you should wear an NIOSH-approved respirator and appropriate protective clothing and eye protection. For information on personal protection visit OSHA's web site at: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/respiratoryprotection/index.html>.

Common dust masks do not protect you against asbestos fibers!

If you must disturb the vermiculite insulation, be sure it is wet. Wet insulation is less likely to produce dust containing asbestos.

## **How should I dispose of flood-damaged vermiculite insulation?**

Your professional asbestos removal contractor should double bag the collected vermiculite in sturdy plastic bags and label the bags with the words "asbestos" or "vermiculite" or "zonolite." Place the bags outside at the curb with other household hazardous wastes.

## **Where can I get more information?**

To learn more about vermiculite and asbestos, visit EPA's web site: [www.epa.gov/asbestos](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos),

For more information, contact Sandi Washek or Jane Kangas, North Dakota Department of Health, at (701) 328-5188 or (701) 476-4122.