Asbestos in Housing FAQ

What is asbestos?
Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous mineral that was used extensively in hundreds of products because of its insulation, fire protection, and acoustical properties. Some examples of products manufactured with asbestos include: vinyl floor tile and mastic (adhesives), pipe insulation, thermal system insulation on mechanical equipment, acoustical plaster, structural steel fireproofing, and ceiling tiles.

Does my dormitory room or apartment have asbestos?
Most buildings, including a majority of dormitories and apartments at Rutgers, constructed prior to 1980 contain asbestos.

Is it safe for me to live in my dormitory or apartment?
Yes. The mere presence of asbestos in your room is not hazardous. Intact and undisturbed asbestos containing materials (ACM) does not pose a health risk. Should you note damage or disturb asbestos containing materials, please contact your Housing office immediately.

Why did I receive a notification that the ceiling in my room contains asbestos?
Students residing in dormitories/apartments that contain asbestos ceilings receive notification letters advising them of the presence of asbestos in their building. These letters identify activities that must be avoided to prevent damage to the ceiling, and request that they report damage immediately to minimize any potential exposure.

How does Rutgers ensure that the asbestos is maintained in good condition?
Rutgers has implemented an asbestos management program to ensure the health and safety of the university community, minimize or prevent asbestos exposures, and when necessary, to remove asbestos products in a safe and effective manner. This includes visual inspections of materials to evaluate its condition, air sampling, training of staff, identification of asbestos containing materials prior to renovation or maintenance activities, and the use of NJ State licensed abatement contractors and monitoring firms when removal or repair work is necessary. All rooms containing asbestos ceilings are inspected yearly prior to the fall semester.

What can I do?
You can help by avoiding damaging asbestos containing building materials. Do not drill into surfaces, hang item on pipes, remove insulation, disturb asbestos ceilings, or dislodge floor tiles. Do not sweep or vacuum suspected asbestos debris. If you think there is damage, please report it to the University Facilities & Capital Planning Service Call Center at 848-445-1234 or online via the Maintenance Service Request system at http://facilities.rutgers.edu/submit-a-maintenance-service-request-NEW. The damage will be evaluated and, if necessary, corrected as promptly as possible.