

a10

asbestos essentials

Non-licensed tasks

This information will help employers, including the self-employed, comply with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2006, to control exposure and protect health.

It is also useful for trade union representatives.

Asbestos fibre causes lung cancer and lung diseases.

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove debris from guttering.

This guttering may be made of asbestos cement, or it may simply collect water from an asbestos cement roof.

It covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It is important to follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

Only carry out this work if you are properly trained.

Main points

- Asbestos fibres can kill.
- Keep exposures low using all the controls in this sheet.
- See also sheets em1, em2, em5, em6, em7 and em8.

Cleaning debris from guttering on an asbestos cement (AC) roof

Access

- Take precautions to prevent the risk of falling if this work is at height.
- Where necessary, erect an access platform.
- Minimise the number of people present.
- Restrict access - use warning tape and notices.

Equipment

- Access platform or scaffolding;
- warning tape and notices;
- scoop or trowel;
- garden type sprayer or watering can, containing water with detergent;
- bucket of water and rags; and
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Provide:
 - disposable overalls fitted with a hood (you may need waterproof overalls for work outside);
 - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate); and
 - protective gloves - select single-use nitrile gloves. If you must use latex gloves, select only 'low protein powder-free' gloves.
- A respirator is not normally required. For reassurance, you may use a respirator - see sheet em6.

Procedure

- Sprinkle the detergent solution into the gutter. Avoid creating a slurry.
- Scoop out the debris into the waste container.
- Wet the debris again if you find dry material.

Cleaning

- Clean the access platform with wet rags.
- Clean the equipment with wet rags.
- Put debris, used rags, gloves and other waste in the waste container.
- Tape the container closed.

Personal decontamination

See sheet em8.

Clearance procedure

- Visually inspect the area to make sure that it has been cleaned properly.
- Clearance air sampling is not normally required.



Wet the debris again if you find dry material, but avoid creating a slurry

Safety Checklist

- ✓ Can you avoid disturbing asbestos by doing the job in some other way?
- ✓ Do you need a license for the work?
- ✓ Always follow all legal requirements.
- ✓ Follow the task guidance sheet.
- ✓ Make sure other risks (eg work at height, manual handling) are assessed and controlled.
- ✓ Use only suitable asbestos waste containers.
- ✓ Double-wrap asbestos waste.
- ✓ Take asbestos waste to a licensed tip.

Caution:

- Don't sweep up dust or debris - use a Type H vacuum cleaner or wet rags.
- Don't take used overalls home.
- Don't re-use disposable PPE.
- Don't smoke.
- Don't eat or drink in the workplace.

Essential information

Download and follow these advice sheets:

- em1 *What to do if you uncover asbestos materials or they are damaged*
- em2 *Training*
- em5 *Wetting asbestos materials*
- em6 *Personal protective equipment*
- em7 *Using rags to clean surfaces and equipment contaminated with asbestos*
- em8 *Personal decontamination*

Further information

- *Tower scaffolds* Construction Information Sheet CIS10 (rev4) HSE Books 2005 Web only version available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cis10.pdf
- *General access scaffolds and ladders* Construction Information Sheet CIS49 (rev1) HSE Books 2003 Web only version available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cis49.pdf
- *Health and safety in roof work* HSG33 (Second edition) HSE Books 1998 ISBN 0 7176 1425 5

Useful links

- For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com.
- HSE priced and free publications are available from HSE Books Tel: 01787 881165 Website: www.hsebooks.co.uk.
- British Standards are available from BSI Customer Services, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL Tel: 020 8996 9001 Fax: 020 8996 7001 e-mail: cservices@bsi-global.com Website: www.bsi-global.com.

This document is available at www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos.htm

© Crown copyright This publication may be freely reproduced, except for advertising, endorsement or commercial purposes. First published as part of *Asbestos Essentials Task Manual* 2001. Please acknowledge the source as HSE.

Published by the Health and Safety Executive 09/06

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.