

a9 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 drill holes in asbestos cement, decorative coatings, bitumen products, floor tiles and other highly-bonded materials containing asbestos.

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.

For asbestos insulating board see sheet a1.

Main points

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

Drilling holes in asbestos cement (AC) and other highly bonded materials

Access

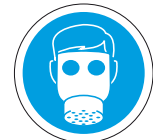
- Take precautions to prevent the risk of falling if this work is at height.
- Minimise the number of people present.
- Restrict access - close doors, and use warning tape and notices.
- If feasible, also restrict access to the rear of asbestos material. If drilling a roof from outside, segregate the area beneath.
- If access to the rear is not possible, tell your supervisor or the building manager to report this as a contaminated area.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Equipment

- 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- drill, manual or powered, set at the lowest speed;
- drill bit, or hole cutter for holes greater than 20 mm diameter;
- thick paste, eg wallpaper paste;
- alkali-resistant, vapour-permeable sealant low in hazardous substances such as solvent;
- plastic or metal sleeve to protect hole edges;
- bucket of water and rags; and
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Provide:
 - disposable overalls fitted with a hood;
 - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate); and
 - respiratory protective equipment - see sheet em6.



Procedure

- Protect surfaces in the restricted area from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape.
- Cover the drilling point and the rear (if accessible) with duct tape to prevent the edges crumbling.
- For cable and pipework, make the hole slightly bigger than required.
- Cover the entry and if accessible, exit points, with a generous amount of paste.
- Drill through the paste.
- Clean off the paste and debris with wet rags. Clean the back surface, if accessible.
- Dispose of as asbestos waste - rags and paste contain dust and fibres.
- Seal the drilled edge with sealant.
- Insert a sleeve to protect the hole's edges from cabling, etc.



Drill through paste.
Duct tape will prevent the edges from crumbling

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.

Cleaning

- Clean the equipment and the area with wet rags.
- Put debris, used rags, polythene sheeting 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.

Essential information

Download and follow these advice sheets:

- em1 *What to do if you uncover asbestos materials or they are damaged*
- em2 *Training*
- 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

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.