

a14

asbestos essentials

Non-licensed tasks

This information will help employers, including the self-employed, comply with the **Control of Asbestos 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 asbestos cement sheets, gutters, drains, ridge caps etc on a small scale.

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 larger scale work, eg demolition, read *Working with asbestos cement* - see 'Further information'.

This sheet is not appropriate for removal of asbestos insulating board. Use an HSE-licensed specialist contractor for such work.

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.

Removing asbestos cement (AC) sheets, gutters, etc

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 - close doors, and use warning tape and notices.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Equipment

- Access platform or scaffolding
- 500- and 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- bolt cutter;
- garden type sprayer;
- bucket of water and rags;
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack;
- lockable skip for larger quantities of waste; and
- asbestos warning stickers;

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
 - 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.

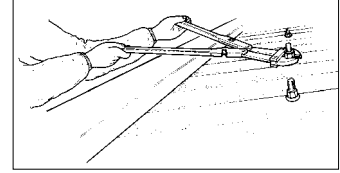
Caution: It is dangerous to seal over exhaust vents from gas-fired equipment. Can the gas be turned off?

Overlaying

- Can you overlay the roof with non-asbestos material instead of removing the asbestos?
- If so, attach the material to existing purlins. Avoid drilling through the asbestos cement. If you cannot avoid this, see sheet A9.
- Note the presence of asbestos material, so it can be managed properly.

Removal

- Avoid or minimise breaking the asbestos cement.
- If fasteners hold the sheets in place, dampen and remove them, and place them in the waste container.
- If the sheets are bolted in place, cut the bolts while avoiding contact with the asbestos cement.
- Remove the bolts carefully and place them in the waste container.
- Unbolt, or use cutters to release gutters, drain pipes, ridge caps, etc. Avoid contact with the asbestos cement.
- If pieces are small enough, place them whole in waste containers.
- Lower asbestos cement to the ground. Do not use rubble chutes.
- Check for debris in fasteners or bolt holes. Clean with wet rags.
- Double-wrap larger pieces in 1000-gauge polythene sheeting.
- Attach asbestos warning stickers.
- Where there are several asbestos cement sheets and other large items, place them in a lockable skip.



Avoid contact with the asbestos cement when cutting the bolts

Cleaning

- Clean the access platform with wet rags.
- 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.
- Visually inspect the access platform and 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 or damage asbestos materials*
- em2 *Training*
- em5 *Wetting asbestos materials*
- em6 *Personal protective equipment (PPE)*
- em7 *Using rags to clean surfaces and equipment contaminated with asbestos*
- em8 *Personal decontamination*

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.

Further information

- *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
- *Working with asbestos cement* HSG189/2 HSE Books 1999 ISBN 0 7176 1667 3

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

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