

a15

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 products, (eg flues, ducts, tanks) from areas such as lofts.

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.

If the article is no longer needed, but doesn't interfere with any other installations or work, then note its location and make sure it stays in good condition.

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) products (flues, tanks, etc)

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.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Equipment

- 500- and 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- scoop or trowel;
- hammer;
- garden type sprayer;
- bucket of water and rags;
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack; and
- asbestos warning stickers.



Asbestos cement water tank



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

- For lofts and similar areas, board out an area large enough to work on and to prevent asbestos contaminating loft insulation nearby.
- Protect surfaces in the restricted area from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape.

Removal

- Avoid or minimise breaking the asbestos cement.
- If the product can be removed intact, strengthen any damaged sections with duct tape before unscrewing the supports.
- Place the screws in the waste container.
- If the product cannot be removed intact, dampen it and wrap it in 1000-gauge polythene sheet.
- Break up the wrapped product with the hammer.
- If pieces are small enough, place them whole in waste containers.
- Lower asbestos cement to the ground. Do not use rubble chutes.
- Double-wrap larger pieces in 1000-gauge polythene sheeting.
- Attach asbestos warning stickers.



Wrap the product in 1000-gauge polythene sheet before breaking it up

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 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*

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
- *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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