

a19

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 fire blankets, or replace them with non-asbestos blankets.

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.

Removing asbestos fire blankets

Access

- Minimise the number of people present.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Equipment

- Suitable non-asbestos replacement fire blanket;
- garden type sprayer;
- bucket of water and rags; and
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack.

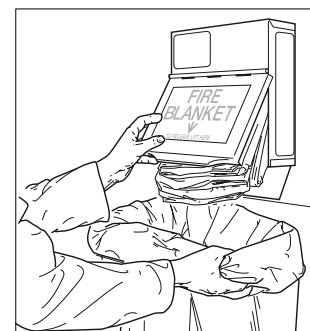
Personal protective equipment (PPE)

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



Procedure

- Where the blanket and container are no longer needed, unscrew the box from the wall and put it, with the blanket inside, into the waste container.
- For a blanket in a box with opening base, open the front for the blanket to fall into the waste container.
- For a blanket in a circular cylinder, first dampen the blanket. Spray up into the container.
- Avoid over-wetting and creating a pool of water.
- Pull the blanket out, into the waste container.



Open the front of the box and let the blanket fall into the waste container

Caution: Never unravel or shake an asbestos fire blanket.

Cleaning

- Clean inside any container that remains, with wet rags.
- Clean the floor beneath the container with wet rags.
- Put used rags and other waste in the waste container.
- Tape the container closed.

Personal decontamination

See sheet em8.

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.

Clearance procedure

- Visually inspect inside the container and the floor beneath it 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*

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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