

a23

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 floor tiles that contain 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.

Main points

- Asbestos fibres can kill.
- Keep exposures low using all the controls in this sheet.
- See also sheets em1, em2, em4, em5, em6, em7 and em8.

Removing asbestos-containing floor tiles

Access

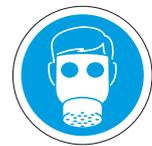
- Minimise the number of people present.
- Restrict access - close doors, and use warning tape and notices.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Equipment

- Warning tape and notices;
- type H vacuum cleaner (BS EN5415) for large areas;
- sharp knife;
- hammer;
- scraper;
- shovel;
- 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.



Asbestos-containing floor tiles

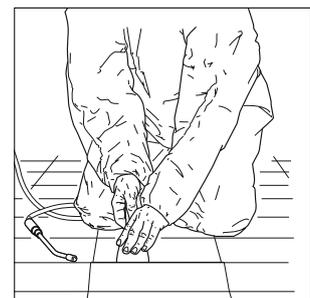
Procedure

Overlaying

- Can you avoid removal, eg by overlaying with non-asbestos material?
- Note the presence of asbestos material, so it can be managed properly.

Removal

- Place the scraper in the joint between the tiles. Lift the tile gently - try to avoid breakage.
- For firmly-fixed tiles, tap the scraper with the hammer.
- For a large tiled area, lift tiles using a shovel. This speeds up the job and prevents kneeling close to the tiles.
- Spray water under the tiles as they are lifted, to suppress dust and wet any asbestos paper that may be present.
- Wet any asbestos paper tile backing as the tiles are lifted.
- Gently scrape up adhering mastic. If necessary, you can heat this to help removal.
- Place debris in the waste container.



Lift tiles gently and use a spray to suppress dust and wet any asbestos paper underneath

Caution: Never sand the floor.

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 larger areas with the Type H vacuum cleaner. Otherwise, where you have removed a few tiles only, use wet rags to clean the floor.
- Clean the equipment with wet rags.
- Put debris, used rags 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*
- em4 *Using a Type H vacuum cleaner when working with asbestos*
- 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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