

# a11

## asbestos essentials

### Non-licensed tasks

This information will help employers and the self-employed to comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

It is also useful for trade union and employee safety representatives.

Asbestos fibres can cause lung cancer and lung diseases.

The sheet covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It can act as a risk assessment for asbestos if it matches what you plan to do.

Follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

Only carry out this work if you are properly trained and have the right equipment.

#### Main points

- Asbestos fibres can kill.
- Keep exposures low using all the controls in this sheet.
- Also follow sheet a0 and equipment and method (em) sheets; see 'Essential information'.



AC debris is common

## Removing asbestos cement (AC) debris

### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to clear up AC. This includes decontamination following a fire.

This sheet is NOT appropriate for cleaning debris from damaged asbestos lagging, insulation or insulating board. Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

For fly-tipped AC waste, see sheet a38.

### Preparing the work area

- Ensure safe access.
- Restrict access - minimise the number of people present.
- Close doors. Use tape and notices to warn others.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Caution: AC roofs are always fragile and cannot bear weight.

### Equipment

- Warning tape and notices;
- scoop, trowel or scraper;
- adhesive tape;
- garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent;
- bucket of water and rags;
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack; and
- clear polythene sack.

### Personal protective equipment (PPE) - see sheet em6

- Provide:
  - disposable overalls fitted with a hood; and
  - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate).
- A respirator is not normally required if there are only a few pieces of contamination in a small area, or the pieces are damp.
- For larger or heavily contaminated areas, a respirator is required.



### Procedure

Caution: make sure the debris is AC only.

- Clean up visible contamination in occupied areas, eg houses and gardens nearby. In large contaminated areas, eg following a fire, you may be unable to remove all the AC.
- Dampen the AC debris with spray.

### SAFETY CHECKLIST

- Can you avoid disturbing asbestos by doing the job in some other way?
  - Do you need a licence for the work?
  - Always follow all legal requirements.
  - Follow the task guidance sheet.
  - Use an asbestos waste container.
  - Dispose at a licensed disposal site.
- Caution:**
- Don't sweep up dust or debris - use a Class H vacuum cleaner or damp rags.
  - Don't take used overalls home.
  - Don't reuse disposable PPE.
  - Don't smoke.
  - Don't eat or drink in the work area.

- Pick up larger pieces of debris. Put them in the waste container.
- For debris on rough surfaces, keep it damp and scoop or scrape it into the waste container.
- Clean contaminated surfaces with damp rags, then put these in the waste container.
- Press adhesive tape onto small dust deposits, then put the tape in the waste container.
- If necessary, repair the AC - see sheet a13.
- Put used rags and other waste in the asbestos waste container and tape it closed.
- Put the asbestos waste container in a clear polythene sack and tape it closed.
- Disposal - see sheet em9.

### Personal decontamination

- See sheet em8.

### Clearance and checking off

- Visually inspect the area to make sure that it has been cleaned properly.
- Clearance air sampling is not normally required.
- Get the premises owner, duty-holder or client to check off the job.

### MORE HELP

- More asbestos pictures - [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/gallery.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/gallery.htm)
- Help to decide if work is licensed - [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/licensing/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/licensing/index.htm)
- For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/). You can view HSE guidance online or order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.
- These task (a) sheets and equipment and method (em) sheets can be downloaded free from [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm)
- See sheet a0 for details of more guidance.

### OTHER HAZARDS

**Work at height** - see [www.hse.gov.uk/falls/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/index.htm). Take precautions to avoid falls. Must you work from a ladder? Where necessary, erect an access platform.

**Work on fragile roofs** - see [www.hse.gov.uk/construction/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/index.htm). Fragile roofs cannot bear weight.

**There may also be other hazards - you need to consider them all.**

### ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

**Download and follow these advice sheets from [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm):**

- em1 *What to do if you uncover or damage materials that could contain asbestos*
- em2 *Training*
- em5 *Wetting asbestos materials*
- em6 *Personal protective equipment (PPE)*
- em7 *Using damp rags to clean surfaces of minor asbestos contamination*
- em8 *Personal decontamination*
- em9 *Disposal of asbestos waste*

This document is available at [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm)

© Crown copyright If you wish to reuse this information visit [www.hse.gov.uk/copyright](http://www.hse.gov.uk/copyright) for details. First published as part of *Asbestos Essentials Task Manual 2001*.

Published by the Health and Safety Executive 04/12

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.