

# a13

## 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'.



Paint or cover the damaged area,  
see a8 and a16

## Repairing damaged asbestos cement (AC)

### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to repair damaged AC.

For badly damaged AC, see sheet a14 or sheet a15.

This sheet is NOT appropriate for repairs to asbestos insulating board - see sheet a6.

### 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

- 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- mastic or sealant for gaps;
- 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)

- Provide:
  - disposable overalls fitted with a hood; and
  - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate).
- A respirator is not normally required.

### Procedure

- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.
- Clean up debris and loose material - see sheet a11.
- Paint the damaged area - see sheet a16
- Alternatively, protect the area by attaching and sealing a non-asbestos panel over the damage - see sheet a8.
- Warn the building owner about the presence of asbestos-containing material, so it can be managed properly.

### 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.

### 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*
- em7 *Using damp rags to clean surfaces of minor asbestos contamination*
- em8 *Personal decontamination*
- em9 *Disposal of asbestos waste*

## Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment and the area with damp rags.
- Put debris, used rags, polythene sheeting 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.

### 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). AC roofs are fragile and cannot bear weight.

**Slips and trips** - see [www.hse.gov.uk/slips/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/index.htm). Floors protected with polythene become very slippery when wet.

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

### 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.

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.

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

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