

a15

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'.



An AC water tank

Removing an asbestos cement (AC) or reinforced plastic product, eg tank, duct, water cistern

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove an AC product (eg tank) or a plastic reinforced product (eg a bakelite cistern) from an area such as a loft.

If the article is no longer needed, but doesn't interfere with any other installations or work, then note its location for the building owner and leave it in place.

See sheet a35 for AC flues and ducts and sheet a23 for plastic floor tiles.

If the product is attached to asbestos insulating board, see sheet em4 on shadow vacuuming and sheet a6 for minor damage repair.

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.

Equipment

- 500- and 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape
- Warning tape and notices
- Screwdriver and spanners
- Hammer
- Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
- Bucket of water and rags
- Asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack
- Clear polythene sack
- Asbestos warning stickers

Personal protective equipment (PPE) – see sheet em6

- Provide:
 - disposable overalls fitted with a hood;
 - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate); and
 - respiratory protective equipment.
- A respirator is not normally needed to remove a reinforced plastic product.



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.
- ✓ Take asbestos waste to 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.

OTHER HAZARDS

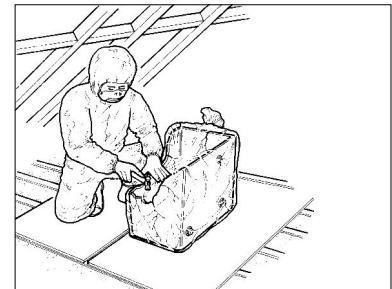
Work at height – see www.hse.gov.uk/falls/index.htm. Take precautions to avoid falls. Must you work from a ladder? Where necessary, erect an access platform.

Manual handling – see www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm. Plan how to remove and handle heavy material and articles safely.

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

Procedure

- For lofts and similar areas, board out an area large enough to work on and to prevent asbestos contaminating loft insulation nearby.
- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.
- Check that the product is not fixed to asbestos insulating board.



Try to remove the product intact, or wrap it in 1000-gauge polythene sheet before breaking it up

Removal

AC product – removal intact

- Strengthen any damaged sections with duct tape.
- Remove fittings, plumbing, etc and unscrew the product from its supports.
- Place the screws in the waste container.
- Double-wrap the product in 1000-gauge polythene sheet.
- Attach asbestos warning stickers.
- Lower to the ground carefully.

AC product – non-intact removal

- Dampen the product and wrap it in 1000-gauge polythene sheet.
- Carefully break the wrapped product with the hammer.
- If pieces are small enough, place them whole in asbestos waste containers.
- Lower large pieces to the ground. Don't drop them or use rubble chutes. Stack sheets carefully.
- Double-wrap large pieces in 1000-gauge polythene sheeting. Seal with duct tape.
- Attach asbestos warning stickers.

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment and the area with damp rags.
- Check for debris in screw or bolt holes. Clean 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.

MORE HELP

- **More asbestos pictures** – www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/gallery.htm
- **Help to decide if work is licensed** – 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/. 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
- See sheet a0 for details of more guidance.

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, dutyholder or client to check off the job.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Download and follow these advice sheets from 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

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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.