Cleaning debris from guttering on an asbestos cement (AC) roof

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove debris from guttering.

The guttering may be made of AC, or it may simply collect water from an AC roof.

Preparing the work area

- Ensure safe access.
- Can you do this work from ground-level?
- Restrict access - minimise the number of people present.
- Use tape and notices to warn others.

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

Equipment

- Warning tape and notices;
- scoop, trowel or scraper;
- garden-type sprayer or watering can 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;
  - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate); and
  - protective gloves. Select single use gloves.
- A respirator is not normally required.

Procedure

- Sprinkle the wetting solution into the gutter. Avoid creating a slurry.
- Scoop out the debris into the waste container.
- Wet the debris again if you find dry material.

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment with damp rags.
- 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.

Wet the debris again if you find dry material, avoid creating a slurry.
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

Take precautions to avoid falls. Must you work from a ladder? Where necessary, erect an access platform.

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

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