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. Clean-up after a fire will always be notifiable non-licensed work (NNLW) – see sheet a0 Introduction to asbestos essentials.

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.

Equipment
- Warning tape and notices
- Scoop, trowel or scraper
- Adhesive tape
- Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
- Bucket of water and rags
- Asbestos waste bag
- Clear polythene bag

Personal protective equipment (PPE) – see sheet em6
- Provide:
  - disposable overalls fitted with a hood;
  - 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.

Important: You must read sheet a0 Introduction to asbestos essentials

Also read the following sheets:
em0 Risk assessments and plans of work
e01 What to do if you discover or accidentally disturb asbestos during your work
e02 Information, instruction and training
e05 Wetting asbestos materials
e06 Personal protective equipment (including RPE)
e07 Using damp rags to clean surfaces of minor asbestos contamination
e08 Personal decontamination
e09 Disposal of asbestos waste
**Procedure**

- Clean up visible contamination in occupied areas, e.g., houses and gardens nearby. In large contaminated areas, e.g., following a fire, you may be unable to remove all the AC.
- Dampen the AC debris with spray.
- Pick up larger pieces of debris. Put them in the asbestos waste bag.
- For debris on rough surfaces, keep it damp and scoop or scrape it into the asbestos waste bag.
- Clean contaminated surfaces with damp rags, then put these in the asbestos waste bag.
- Press adhesive tape onto small dust deposits, then put the tape in the asbestos waste bag.
- If necessary, repair the AC – see sheet a13.
- Put used rags and other waste in the asbestos waste bag and tape it closed.
- Put the asbestos waste bag in a clear polythene bag 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, dutyholder or client to check off the job.

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**Caution**

AC roofs are always fragile and cannot bear weight.

**Other hazards**

Work at height – see www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height. Take precautions to avoid falls.


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

**Caution**

Make sure the debris is AC only.

AC debris is common