

a12

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.

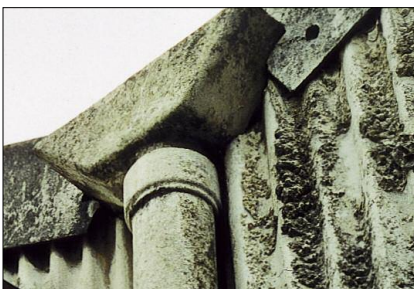
It can act as a risk assessment for asbestos if it matches what you plan to do.

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'.



Moss and lichen growth
on asbestos cement

Cleaning weathered asbestos cement (AC) roofing and cladding

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to clean AC cladding and roofing, either to improve its appearance or to prepare it for a surface coating.

This sheet is NOT appropriate for cleaning asbestos insulating board. Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

Preparing the work area

- Ensure safe access.
- 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

- 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape
- Warning tape and notices
- Approved biocide
- Scoop or trowel
- Scraper
- Proprietary cleaning machine
- Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
- Bucket of water and rags
- Asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack
- Clear polythene sack

Personal protective equipment (PPE) – see sheet em6

- Provide:
 - disposable overalls fitted with a hood (you may need waterproof overalls);
 - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate);
 - protective gloves. Select single use gloves; and
 - a disposable particulate respirator (eg FF P3) for manual scraping and for operating the filtration system.
- A respirator is not normally needed for an operator who is well away from the cleaning machine.



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:

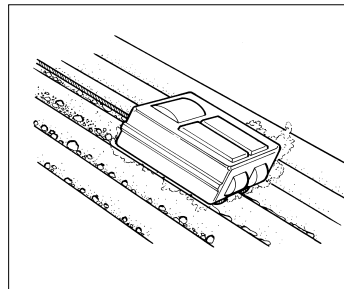
- Don't sweep up dust or debris – use a Class H vacuum cleaner or damp rags.
- Don't take used overalls home.
- Don't reuse disposable PPE.
- Don't smoke.
- Don't eat or drink in the work area.

OTHER HAZARDS

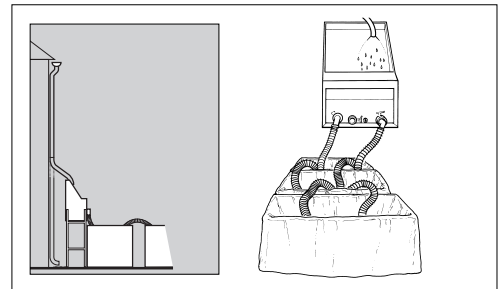
Work at height - see www.hse.gov.uk/falls/index.htm. Take precautions to avoid falls. Must you work from a ladder? Where necessary, erect an access platform.

Work on fragile roofs - see www.hse.gov.uk/construction/index.htm. Fragile roofs cannot bear weight.

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



Cleaning machine



The contractor should use a collection and filter system

Procedure

- Prevent slurry entering the building. Seal gaps into the building with polythene sheeting, secured with duct tape.

Caution: It is dangerous to seal over exhaust vents from gas-fired equipment. Can the equipment be turned off?

- If necessary, remove debris first – see sheet a11.
- Only in exceptional circumstances is high pressure jetting appropriate. This requires a specialist contractor.

Method 1: Cleaning cladding accessible from ground level

- Prepare the biocide according to the instructions on the label. Apply it by low pressure sprayer.
- Allow time for the biocide to work – check the product label.
- Keep the surface wet and remove growths by gentle scraping. Dead plant roots are hard to remove – leave these in place.
- Scoop debris into the waste container.

Method 2: Employ a specialist roof cleaning contractor with a cleaning machine

- This method creates a lot of slurry that must be collected for disposal.
- The contractor should:
 - divert the slurry through a collection and filtration system;
 - keep solid waste wet and put it in the waste container; and
 - flush out the slurry collector with clean water.

Cleaning and disposal

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

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.