Health and Safety Executive

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.

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
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.

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

OTHER HAZARDS

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. AC roofs are fragile and cannot bear weight.

Slips and trips - see 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

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