Removing asbestos paper linings

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove asbestos paper linings (e.g., from a boiler casing, beneath lino, or where asbestos paper separates easily from other materials).

This sheet is NOT appropriate for removing asbestos paper lagging. Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

Preparing the work area

- Restrict access - minimise the number of people present.
- Close doors. Use tape and notices to warn others.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Equipment

- 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- permanent sealant;
- sharp knife;
- garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent;
- paint brush;
- bucket of water and rags;
- asbestos waste container, e.g., labelled polythene sack; and
- clear polythene sack.

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.

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’.

Asbestos paper linings can be found in boiler casings, under lino or tiles and many other places. Paper gaskets can contain asbestos.
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
Electrical hazards - see www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/index.htm. Get a competent electrician to isolate and reconnect electricity supply.
There may also be other hazards - you need to consider them all.

Procedure
■ Isolate the power supply - use a competent electrician.
■ Only work on a boiler that is cold.
■ Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.

Removal
■ Carefully remove the covering - dismantle metal covers on a boiler; ease back lino; etc.
■ Protect vulnerable parts with polythene sheeting, fixed with tape to a non-asbestos surface.
■ Dampen the exposed paper.
■ If possible, remove the paper whole. Otherwise, cut the paper - don’t tear it - and dampen as you remove it.
■ Put the paper in the waste container.
■ Brush any paper you can’t remove with sealant.
■ Brush the back surface of other material, eg lino, with sealant before disposal.

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.
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
- **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.