

a19

asbestos essentials

Non-licensed tasks

This information will help employers and the self-employed to comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006.

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'.



Open the front, dampen, and slide the blanket into the waste container

Removing an asbestos fire blanket

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove an asbestos fire blanket, or replace it with a non-asbestos blanket.

Preparing the work area

- Restrict access - minimise the number of people present.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Equipment

- suitable non-asbestos replacement fire blanket;
- 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

Removal

- Where the blanket and container are no longer needed, unscrew the box from the wall and put it, with the blanket inside, into the waste container.
- For a blanket in a box with opening base, open the front and dampen with spray.
- Slide the blanket into the waste container.
- For a blanket in a circular cylinder: first dampen the blanket. Spray up into the container.
- Avoid over-wetting and creating a pool of water.
- Pull the blanket out, into the waste container.

Caution: Never unravel or shake an asbestos fire blanket.

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean inside any container that remains, with damp rags.
- Clean the floor beneath the container 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.

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.

- Disposal - see sheet em9.

Personal decontamination

- See sheet em8

Clearance and checking off

- Visually inspect inside the container and the floor beneath it to make sure that these have 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

There may 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.
- ✓ 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.

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*

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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