Removing a single (screwed-in) asbestos insulating board (AIB) ceiling tile

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove a single AIB ceiling tile.

This sheet is NOT appropriate:

- for the removal of AIB slats;
- where the tile has more than minor damage;
- where the tile is heavily painted so its removal could damage adjacent tiles; or
- if work lasts more than one hour per week for a worker, or two hours in total for two or more workers; (this includes time to set up, dismantle and clean the mini-enclosure).

Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

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

- Method 1: 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- Method 2: use a mini-enclosure if available – if not, use timber or other framework with 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape. See sheet em3;
- 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- Class H vacuum cleaner (BS 8520) – see sheet em4;
- sealant, eg polyvinyl acetate (PVA);
- magnet;
- screwdriver;
- non-asbestos replacement ceiling tile;
- 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) — see sheet em6

- Provide:
  - disposable overalls fitted with a hood;
  - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate); and
  - respiratory protective equipment.
Method 1: Removing a single ceiling tile less than 0.36 square metres in area (eg 60 cm x 60 cm)

Procedure
- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.

Removal
- Locate steel screws with the magnet. Locate brass screws by careful paint scraping.
- Use ‘shadow vacuuming’ to control dust – see sheet em4.
- Unscrew – put the screws in the waste container.
- Carefully lower one end of the tile. Vacuum its upper surface.
- Spray the upper surface with PVA.
- Keep the tile flat and lower it gently.
- Place the tile in the asbestos waste container.
- If asbestos fillets are present, seal with a sealant.
- Fix a new non-asbestos tile by attaching it to a non-asbestos surface, not to asbestos fillets.

Method 2: Removing a single ceiling tile more than 0.36 square metres in area (eg 60 cm x 60 cm)

Procedure
- Erect a proprietary ‘mini-enclosure’, or build one as described in sheet em3.

Removal
- Follow the removal instructions for method 1.
- Double-wrap the tile in 1000-gauge polythene sheeting.

Cleaning and disposal
- Clean a mini-enclosure with the Class H vacuum cleaner and dismantle it as advised in sheet em3.
- Clean the area and equipment with the Class H vacuum cleaner and damp rags.
- Put 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, 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
- em3 Building and dismantling a mini-enclosure
- em4 Using a Class H vacuum cleaner for asbestos
- 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.