Laying cables in areas containing undamaged asbestos materials

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to run cables through an area containing intact asbestos lagging, insulation, insulating board or coating.

If you need to remove an asbestos insulating board (AIB) ceiling tile for access, see sheet a2.

This sheet is NOT appropriate where damaged asbestos material is present, or for cabling over a suspended AIB ceiling. 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

- 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- adhesive spray;
- 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.

Procedure

- Wherever possible, use existing cable trays or conduits, or fix cables to non-asbestos surfaces.
- If there is no alternative to running cables near asbestos, protect the surfaces with 500-gauge polythene sheeting secured with adhesive spray or duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.
- Avoid drilling through asbestos-containing materials.
- Avoid fixing cables to anything that contains asbestos.
- Ensure that cabling only runs over the protected sections.
Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment 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.

OTHER HAZARDS


Take precautions to avoid falls. Must you work from a ladder? Where necessary, erect an access platform.

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.
✓ 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
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 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

© Crown copyright If you wish to reuse this information visit www.hse.gov.uk/copyright for details. First published as part of Asbestos Essentials Task Manual 2001.

Published by the Health and Safety Executive 04/12

Laying cables in areas containing undamaged asbestos materials