Removing asbestos-containing bituminous products

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove asbestos-containing bituminous products such as built-up roofing, gutter linings or damp-proof courses.

This sheet is not appropriate for work with metal cladding lined with asbestos-containing bitumen (eg 'Galbestos') - see sheet a22.

Preparing the work area

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

Caution: For roofwork, check if the roof may be fragile.

Equipment

- 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- sharp knife;
- scraper;
- shovel;
- garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent;
- bucket of water and rags;
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack;
- clear polythene sack;
- lockable skip for larger quantities of waste; and
- for roofwork, interlocking bucket-type rubble chute into the skip.

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’.

Built up bituminous roofing and bituminous asbestos fabric over a doorway
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.

Cut and remove manageable sections

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

■ Seal access points, eg skylights, with polythene sheeting and duct tape.

Caution: It is dangerous to seal over exhaust vents from gas-fired equipment. Can the equipment be turned off?

Overlaying AC sheets

■ Can you avoid removal, eg by overlaying with non-asbestos bituminous felt?
■ Warn the building owner about the presence of asbestos material, so it can be managed properly.

Removal

■ Can you minimise the amount for removal, cutting around the area?
■ For safe handling, cut and remove manageable sections. Place these in the chute or the skip.
■ Remove adhering material by dampening and gentle scraping.
■ Collect up all debris.
■ Remove large dust deposits by dampening and shovelling into the waste container.
■ Dampen dust and debris from disintegrating felt and place in the waste container.

■ Caution: Don’t rip up asbestos bituminous felt; never burn the debris.

Cleaning and disposal

■ Clean the equipment with damp rags.
■ Dismantle and decontaminate the chute 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.

OTHER HAZARDS


Manual handling - see www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm. Plan how to remove and handle heavy material and articles safely.

There may also be other hazards - you need to consider them all.
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

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

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.