Removing asbestos-containing bituminous products, such as roofing felt, gutter linings or damp-proof courses

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.

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 bag
- Clear polythene bag
- Lockable skip for larger quantities of waste
- For roof work, interlocking bucket-type rubble chute into the skip
Caution

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

For roof work, check if the roof may be fragile.

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

Other hazards

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

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

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Provide:
  - disposable overalls fitted with a hood;
  - 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.

Overlaying

- Can you avoid removal, eg by overlaying with non-asbestos bituminous felt?
- Warn the building owner about the presence of asbestos material you have covered by overlaying 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 asbestos waste bag.
- Dampen dust and debris from disintegrating felt and place in the asbestos waste bag.
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Cut and remove manageable sections

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 bag and tape it closed.
- Put the asbestos waste bag in a clear polythene bag 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.