Removing metal cladding lined with asbestos-containing bitumen

What this sheet covers
This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove metal cladding lined with asbestos-containing bitumen (eg ‘Galbestos’).

This sheet is not appropriate for work with asbestos-containing bitumen products (eg roofing felt, damp-proof course) – see sheet a21.

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- and 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape
- Warning tape and notices
- Bolt cutter
- Hammer
- Chisel
- Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
- Bucket of water and rags
- Asbestos waste bag
- Clear polythene bag
- Lockable skip for larger quantities of waste
- Asbestos warning stickers

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.
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Procedure

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

Removal

- Carefully remove fixtures such as pipework.
- If the sheets are screwed in place, knock off the screw heads with the hammer and chisel.
- If the sheets are bolted in place, cut the bolts while avoiding contact with the asbestos-containing bitumen. Remove the bolts carefully.
- Pull the sheet away from its fastenings, dampening exposed surfaces.
- Lower sheets to the ground – do not use a rubble chute.
- Put small items and debris in the asbestos waste bag.
- Double-wrap cladding pieces in 1000-gauge polythene sheeting.
- Attach asbestos warning stickers.
- Where there are several sheets of cladding, place them in a lockable skip.

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment and the area with damp rags.
- Check for debris in screw or bolt holes. Clean 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.

Caution

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

Other hazards

Work at height – see www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height. Take precautions to avoid falls.

Slips and trips – see www.hse.gov.uk/slip.

Floors protected with polythene become very slippery when wet.

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

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This document is available at: www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/

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