

# a23

## asbestos essentials

### Non-licensed tasks

#### Essential information

**Important:** You must read sheet a0 *Introduction to asbestos essentials*

Also read the following sheets:

**em0** Risk assessments and plans of work

**em1** What to do if you discover or accidentally disturb asbestos during your work

**em2** Information, instruction and training

**em4** Using a Class H vacuum cleaner for asbestos

**em5** Wetting asbestos materials

**em6** Personal protective equipment (including RPE)

**em7** Using damp rags to clean surfaces of minor asbestos contamination

**em8** Personal decontamination

**em9** Disposal of asbestos waste

# Removing asbestos-containing floor tiles and mastic

### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove floor tiles that contain asbestos.

These may also have asbestos-paper backing, or be fixed with asbestos-containing mastic.

Removal of floor tiles with an asbestos-paper backing will be notifiable non-licensed work (NNLW) – see sheet a0 *Introduction to asbestos essentials*.

### Preparing the work area

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

### Equipment

- Warning tape and notices
- Class H vacuum cleaner (BS 8520) (if available – see sheet em4) for large areas
- Sharp knife
- Hammer
- Scraper
- Shovel
- Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
- Bucket of water and rags
- Asbestos waste bag
- Clear polythene bag



Floor tiles that contain asbestos can also have asbestos-paper backing, or be fixed with asbestos-containing mastic

**Caution**

Never sand the floor.

**Other hazards**

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

**Personal protective equipment (PPE) – see sheet em6**

- Provide:
  - disposable overalls fitted with a hood;
  - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate);
  - respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

**Procedure****Overlaying**

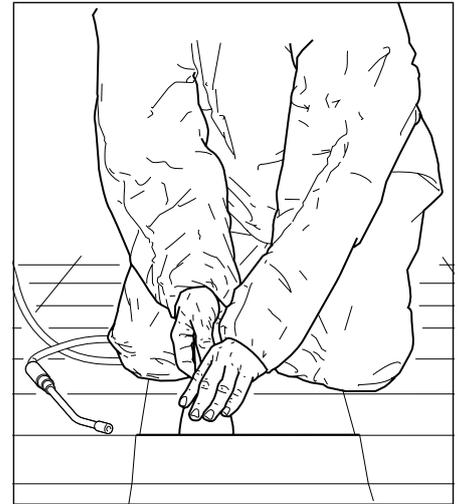
- Can you avoid removal, eg by overlaying with non-asbestos material?
- Warn the building owner about the presence of asbestos material you have covered by overlaying, so it can be managed properly.

**Removal**

- Place the scraper in the joint between the tiles. Lift the tile gently – try to avoid breakage.
- For firmly-fixed tiles, tap the scraper with the hammer.
- For a large tiled area, lift tiles using a shovel. This speeds up the job and avoids kneeling close to the tiles.
- Spray water under the tiles as they are lifted, to suppress dust and wet any asbestos paper that may be present. See also sheet a17.
- Wet any asbestos paper tile backing as the tiles are lifted.
- Gently scrape up adhering mastic. You can soften mastic with solvent, by warming with an infra-red lamp, or embrittle it with dry ice.
- Place debris in the asbestos waste bag.



Asbestos-containing mastic



Spray water under the tiles to suppress dust as you lift them gently, avoiding breakage

### Cleaning and disposal

- Where you have removed only a few tiles, use damp rags to clean the floor. Clean larger areas with the Class H vacuum cleaner (if available) and/or damp rags.
- Clean the equipment with damp rags.
- Put debris, used rags 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.

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