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asbestos essentials

Non-licensed tasks

This information will help employers and the self-employed to comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006.

It is also useful for trade union and employee safety representatives.

Asbestos fibres can cause lung cancer and lung diseases.

The sheet covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It can act as a risk assessment for asbestos if it matches what you plan to do.

Follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

Only carry out this work if you are properly trained and have the right equipment.

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'.

Removing flexible asbestos textile duct connectors (gaiters)

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove a gaiter (flexible asbestos textile connector) from metal ductwork sections or from the joint with a fan.

This sheet applies where the gaiter is riveted to the metal frame, and where it is clipped in place over the ducting.

This sheet is NOT appropriate if adjacent ducting is lagged with asbestos. Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

Preparing the work area

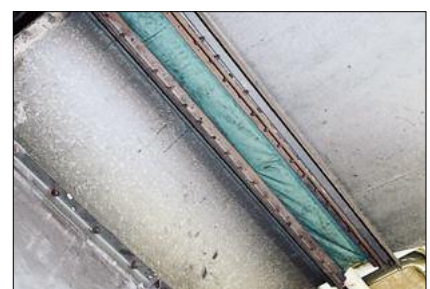
- Ensure safe access.
- Restrict access - minimise the number of people present.
- Close doors. Use tape and notices to warn others.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Equipment

- Warning tape and notices;
- drill - manual or powered, set at the lowest speed;
- screwdriver;
- scraper;
- garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent;
- 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.



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.
- ✓ Dispose at 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.

Work at height - see www.hse.gov.uk/falls/index.htm. Take precautions to avoid falls. Must you work from a ladder? Where necessary, erect an access platform.

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.



Riveted connector detail



Clipped connector

Procedure

- Turn off and lock off the system.

Method 1: riveted flexible gaiters (duct connectors)

- Where possible, unbolt the assembly holding the connector and remove it whole.
- Otherwise, dampen the gaiter and drill out the rivets, avoiding the gaiter material.
- Ease the metal plate away. Dampen the gaiter's inner surface.
- Remove the gaiter and place it in the waste container.
- Dampen any debris adhering, and carefully scrape it into the waste container.

Method 2: clipped flexible gaiters (duct connectors)

- Dampen the gaiter.
- Remove the clips holding the gaiter in place.
- Slide the gaiter off the ducting and put it in the waste container.
- Wipe the clips with damp rags.

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment and the area with damp rags.
- Check for debris in screw or bolt holes or on the ducting. Clean with damp rags.
- Put debris, used rags 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.

MORE HELP

- **More asbestos pictures** - www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/gallery.htm
- **Help to decide if work is licensed** - www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/licensing/index.htm
- For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online or order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.
- These task (a) sheets and equipment and method (em) sheets can be downloaded free from www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm
- See sheet a0 for details of more guidance.

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.

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*
- 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 document is available at www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm

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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.