

a25

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 compressed asbestos fibre (CAF) gaskets and asbestos rope seals

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove CAF gaskets and asbestos rope seals from pipework, vessels and plant, or heaters, boilers etc.

If the gasket or seals are substantially broken up or damaged during removal then the work will be notifiable non-licensed work (NNLW) – see sheet a0 *Introduction to asbestos essentials*.

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-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape
- Warning tape and notices
- Class H vacuum cleaner (BS 8520) (if available – see sheet em4) to collect adhering gasket residues
- Scraper
- Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
- Bucket of water and rags
- Asbestos waste bag
- Clear polythene bag

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).



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/slips. Floors protected with polythene become very slippery when wet.

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

Procedure

- Ensure the system has been made safe (pipework emptied, electrical supply isolated etc).
- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.
- Protect vulnerable components with polythene sheeting.

Removal

- Unbolt or unscrew the flange, or dismantle the equipment.
- Once accessible, dampen the asbestos. Continue dampening as it is exposed.
- Ease the gasket or rope seal away with the scraper, and place into the asbestos waste bag.
- Keep the surface damp, and ease away asbestos residues.
- Gently scrape off residues using 'shadow vacuuming' (if available – see sheet em4).

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment and the area with the Class H vacuum cleaner (if available) and/or damp rags.
- Put 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.



Gasket material left on a pipe flange



Joint packing on a flue



String gasket between metal sheets



Some examples of rope seals found on boilers

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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