Removing a single asbestos-containing gas or electric heater

What this sheet covers
This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove:

- a single gas heater (catalytic, radiant, coal- or log-effect);
- an electric heater (storage, radiant etc).

This sheet is not appropriate if the work involves asbestos insulating board and the work lasts more than one hour for one worker in a seven-day period, or exceeds two hours for two or more workers in a seven-day period. Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

You must use a Gas Safe-registered engineer to disconnect and make safe gas appliances.

Preparing the work area
- Have a competent electrician to isolate the appliance from the electricity supply.
- You must have a Gas Safe-registered engineer to disconnect gas appliances and make them safe.
- 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
- Class H vacuum cleaner (BS 8520) – see sheet em4
- Screwdriver and spanners
- Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
- Bucket of water and rags
- Asbestos waste bag
- Clear polythene bag
- Asbestos warning stickers

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
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

- Can you remove and dispose of the appliance intact?

Preparation

- Remove furniture and fittings from the area, or protect them from contamination using 500-gauge polythene sheet.
- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.
- Check if the appliance is attached to asbestos insulating board (AIB); sometimes this is wall-mounted behind heaters.

Removal

- Remove the cover, wipe it with damp rags and set it aside.
- Vacuum inside the appliance. Vacuuming should remove all loose material or articles.
- Dampen the parts that may contain asbestos, eg panels, board, paper, string and fire cement.
- Unscrew or unbolt fixed parts using shadow vacuuming – see sheet em4. Put the fixings in the asbestos waste bag.
- Remove panels or parts intact and put them in the asbestos waste bag.
- Vacuum inside the carcass before removal. If it is attached to AIB, unscrew it using shadow vacuuming. Put the screws in the asbestos waste bag.
- If fixed to AIB, see sheet a6 for repairing minor damage.
- Double-wrap the carcass and the cover with 1000-gauge polythene sheeting. Seal with duct tape. Attach asbestos warning stickers.

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment and the area with 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.
**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.