Removing a single asbestos insulation board (AlB) panel, less than 1 m², fixed with nails or screws

What this sheet covers
This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove a single AlB sheet less than 1 m² in area.

This sheet is not appropriate:
- when the AlB has more than minor damage or is heavily painted so its removal could damage adjacent panels;
- when the AlB is in the form of ceiling tiles or slats;
- for removing heavily nailed or centre-nailed panels;
- for soffits;
- for a panel larger than 1 m²;
- for removing more than two small panels a week;
- if 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.

Please note: If the AlB starts to deteriorate on removal of the nails then the work may 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- and 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape
- Warning tape and notices
- Class H vacuum cleaner (BS 8520) – see sheet em4
- Thick paste, eg wallpaper paste or shaving foam
- Sealant, eg polyvinyl acetate (PVA)
- Permanent sealant
- Magnet
Caution
If the panel has nails in the centre, the job needs an HSE-licensed contractor.

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

Manual handling – see www.hse.gov.uk/msd. Plan how to remove and handle heavy material and articles safely.

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

Screwdriver
Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
Paint brush
Bucket of water and rags
Asbestos waste bag
Clear polythene bag
Asbestos warning stickers

Personal protective equipment (PPE) – see sheet em6

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

Procedure
- Inspect carefully. If the AIB is in good condition and is unlikely to get damaged upon removal, follow this sheet.
- If the board is badly damaged or likely to get damaged, use an HSE-licensed contractor.

Panel with nails
- Erect a mini-enclosure – see sheet em3.
- If you can remove nails with the claw, do so with ‘shadow vacuuming’ – see sheet em4.
If this is not possible, you need to break the panel across one corner. Cover the intended break line with pastel foam.

- Deeply score the panel across one nailed corner through the paste/foam.
- Lever to break the panel at the scored line – hold the vacuum nozzle near to the break to collect as much dust as possible.
- Ease the panel away to loosen other nails, and remove these with shadow vacuuming.
- Remove the panel and vacuum all newly-exposed surfaces.

**Panel with screws**

- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.
- Locate steel screws with the magnet. Locate brass screws by careful paint scraping.
- Use ‘shadow vacuuming’ to control dust – see sheet em4.
- Unscrew – put the screws in the waste bag.
- Ease the panel away. Vacuum its newly-exposed surfaces and screw holes.

**All panels**

- Spray the panel with PVA.
- Double-wrap large panels with 1000-gauge polythene sheeting; place smaller boards in the waste bag.
- Attach asbestos warning stickers.
- Gently paint newly-exposed surfaces and screw holes with sealant paint.

**Cleaning and disposal**

- Clean any newly-exposed surfaces with the Class H vacuum cleaner.
- Clean a mini-enclosure with the Class H vacuum cleaner and dismantle it as advised in sheet em3.
- Clean the area and equipment with the Class H vacuum cleaner and damp rags.
- Put debris, used rags, polythene sheeting, paintbrush 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.
Panel with screws: Use shadow vacuuming to control dust as you remove screws

Panel with nails: If possible, remove nails with a claw and shadow vacuuming. If this is difficult without damaging the board, apply paste to one corner and make a deep score line so you can lever the corner away first

**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.