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

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove a single AIB sheet less than 1 square metre in area.

This sheet is NOT appropriate:

- when the AIB has more than minor damage or is heavily painted so its removal could damage adjacent panels;
- when the AIB 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 square metre; or
- for removing more than two small panels a week.

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

- 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
- Screwdriver
- Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
- Paint brush
- Bucket of water and rags
- Asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack
- Asbestos warning stickers
- 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.
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

Caution: If the panel has nails in the centre, the job needs an HSE-licensed contractor.

- 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 paste/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 container.
- 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 container.
- 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 container and tape it closed.
- Put the asbestos waste container in a clear polythene sack 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.