

**em5**asbestos  
essentials

# Wetting asbestos materials

## Equipment and method sheet

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### Non-licensed tasks

This information will help employers and the self-employed to comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

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

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

#### Remember:

- Asbestos fibres can cause fatal lung disease and lung cancer.
- Check what you're working on before you start.
- Read the safety checklist and sheet a0.
- You must be trained to work safely with asbestos materials.

### What this sheet covers

This sheet explains why you must wet asbestos materials before working on them, and how to do this.

The spraying technique can also be used when painting or sealing asbestos materials.

Damp asbestos materials release far fewer asbestos fibres into the air. Don't drench them and create a waste 'slurry'. Electrical equipment in the area needs to be isolated and protected.

### Equipment

- Wetting agent – or you could use liquid detergent as an alternative
- Sprayer, either a garden type spray or a low-pressure spraying machine less than 3.4 bar (50 psi)
- Brush or roller

### Procedures

- Wet the asbestos materials before starting any work. Don't work on dry asbestos materials.
- Water on its own does not effectively wet asbestos-containing materials, wetting agents should be used.
- Some asbestos materials, eg board/sheet cannot be wetted all the way through so you need additional methods to control dust exposure, eg a Class H vacuum cleaner to shadow vacuum during screw removal.
- Normal dry Class H vacuums can be used for removal of moist or wetted material, but not water.

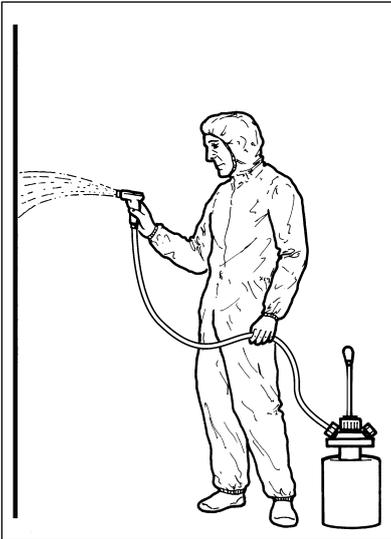


Spray at low pressure; high-pressure spray could disturb fibres from asbestos paper under these tiles

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**Caution**

Some tasks will be carried out at height. Make sure that wetting does not create a slipping risk.



Spraying is the preferred wetting method

**Wetting**

- Spraying is the preferred wetting method.
- If you use a brush or roller, dispose of it as asbestos waste.
- Dilute the wetting agent with water according to the manufacturer's instructions. This is usually:
  - 10–15 parts water to 1 part wetting agent; or
  - 8 parts water to 1 part liquid detergent.
- Allow the spray to 'fall' onto the asbestos material – not hit it as a jet.
- Spray carefully; use a slow backwards and forwards motion. Avoid concentrating on any one area – this can disturb the asbestos material or leave dry patches.
- Over-wetting material can create a waste slurry which will be difficult to clean up.

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