

# a21

## asbestos essentials

### Non-licensed tasks

This information will help employers and the self-employed to comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006.

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

Asbestos fibres can cause lung cancer and lung diseases.

The sheet covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It can act as a risk assessment for asbestos if it matches what you plan to do.

Follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

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

#### Main points

- Asbestos fibres can kill.
- Keep exposures low using all the controls in this sheet.
- Also follow sheet a0 and equipment and method (em) sheets; see 'Essential information'.

## Removing asbestos-containing bituminous products

### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove asbestos-containing bituminous products such as built-up roofing, gutter linings or damp-proof courses.

This sheet is not appropriate for work with metal cladding lined with asbestos-containing bitumen (eg 'Galbestos') - see sheet a22.

### Preparing the work area

- Ensure safe access.
- Restrict access - minimise the number of people present.
- Use tape and notices to warn others.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Caution: For roofwork, check if the roof may be fragile.

### Equipment

- 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- sharp knife;
- scraper;
- shovel;
- garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent;
- bucket of water and rags;
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack;
- clear polythene sack;
- lockable skip for larger quantities of waste; and
- for roofwork, interlocking bucket-type rubble chute into the skip.



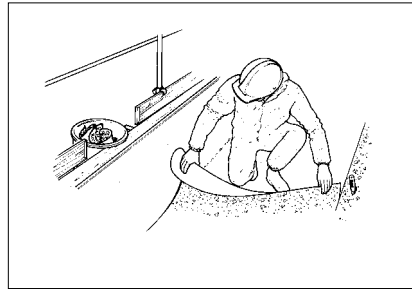
*Built up bituminous roofing and bituminous asbestos fabric over a doorway*

### SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ✓ Can you avoid disturbing asbestos by doing the job in some other way?
- ✓ Do you need a licence for the work?
- ✓ Always follow all legal requirements.
- ✓ Follow the task guidance sheet.
- ✓ Use an asbestos waste container.
- ✓ Take asbestos waste to a licensed disposal site.

**Caution:**

- Don't sweep up dust or debris - use a Class H vacuum cleaner or damp rags.
- Don't take used overalls home.
- Don't re-use disposable PPE.
- Don't smoke.
- Don't eat or drink in the work area.



*Cut and remove manageable sections*

### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Provide:
  - disposable overalls fitted with a hood; and
  - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate).
- A respirator is not normally required.

### Procedure

- Seal access points, eg skylights, with polythene sheeting and duct tape.

**Caution: It is dangerous to seal over exhaust vents from gas-fired equipment. Can the equipment be turned off?**

### Overlaying AC sheets

- Can you avoid removal, eg by overlaying with non-asbestos bituminous felt?
- Warn the building owner about the presence of asbestos material, so it can be managed properly.

### OTHER HAZARDS

**Work at height** - see [www.hse.gov.uk/falls/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/index.htm). Take precautions to avoid falls. Must you work from a ladder? Where necessary, erect an access platform.

**Work on fragile roofs** - see [www.hse.gov.uk/construction/information.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/information.htm). Fragile roofs cannot bear weight.

**Manual handling** - see [www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm). Plan how to remove and handle heavy material and articles safely.

**There may also be other hazards - you need to consider them all.**

### Removal

- Can you minimise the amount for removal, cutting around the area?
- For safe handling, cut and remove manageable sections. Place these in the chute or the skip.
- Remove adhering material by dampening and gentle scraping.
- Collect up all debris.
- Remove large dust deposits by dampening and shovelling into the waste container.
- Dampen dust and debris from disintegrating felt and place in the waste container.

- **Caution: Don't rip up asbestos bituminous felt; never burn the debris.**

### Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment with damp rags.
- Dismantle and decontaminate the chute with damp rags.
- Put debris, used rags, polythene sheeting, 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

### MORE HELP

- **Licensed asbestos contractors, and training providers** - HSE's Infoline  
Tel: 0845 345 0055  
Textphone: 0845 408 9577  
e-mail: [hse.infoline@natbrit.com](mailto:hse.infoline@natbrit.com)  
and at [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/licensing/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/licensing/index.htm)
- **HSE priced and free publications** -  
HSE Books Tel: 01787 881165  
and at [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)
- **Qualified hygienists** - The  
British Occupational Hygiene  
Society (BOHS) Tel: 01332 298101  
and at [www.bohs.org/](http://www.bohs.org/) under  
'Professional > Consultants'
- **Trade associations** - the Asbestos  
Removal Contractors Association  
(ARCA) Tel: 01283 531126 Website:  
[www.arcaweb.org.uk](http://www.arcaweb.org.uk), or the Asbestos  
Control and Abatement Division (ACAD)  
Tel: 01325 466704
- **Disposal of asbestos waste** -  
[www.environment-agency.co.uk](http://www.environment-agency.co.uk),  
[www.sepa.org.uk/](http://www.sepa.org.uk/), or  
[www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs](http://www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs).
- **More asbestos pictures** -  
[www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/gallery.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/gallery.htm)
- **Help to decide if work is licensed** -  
[www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/licensing/  
index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/licensing/index.htm)

### ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

**Download and follow these advice sheets from [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm):**

- em1 *What to do if you uncover or damage materials that could contain asbestos*
- em2 *Training*
- em5 *Wetting asbestos materials*
- em7 *Using damp rags to clean surfaces of minor asbestos contamination*
- em8 *Personal decontamination*
- em9 *Disposal of asbestos waste*

### 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, duty-holder or client to check off the job.

This document is available at [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm)

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This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.