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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 metal cladding lined with asbestos-containing bitumen

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove metal cladding lined with asbestos-containing bitumen (eg 'Galbestos').

This sheet is not appropriate for work with asbestos-containing bitumen products (eg roofing felt, damp-proof course) - see sheet a21.

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;
- bolt cutter;
- hammer;
- chisel;
- 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
- asbestos warning stickers.

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

- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.

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

Removal

- Carefully remove fixtures such as pipework.
- If the sheets are screwed in place, knock off the screw heads with the hammer and chisel.

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 and at www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/licensing/index.htm
- **HSE priced and free publications** - HSE Books Tel: 01787 881165 and at www.hsebooks.co.uk
- **Qualified hygienists** - The British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) Tel: 01332 298101 and at www.bohs.org/ under 'Professional > Consultants'
- **Trade associations** - the Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA) Tel: 01283 531126 Website: www.arcaweb.org.uk, or the Asbestos Control and Abatement Division (ACAD) Tel: 01325 466704
- **Disposal of asbestos waste** - www.environment-agency.co.uk, www.sepa.org.uk/, or www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs.
- **More asbestos pictures and help to decide if work is licensed** - www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/index.htm

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.

- If the sheets are bolted in place, cut the bolts while avoiding contact with the asbestos-containing bitumen. Remove the bolts carefully.
- Pull the sheet away from its fastenings, dampening exposed surfaces.
- Lower sheets to the ground - do not use a rubble chute.
- Put small items and debris in the waste container.
- Double-wrap cladding pieces in 1000-gauge polythene sheeting. Attach asbestos warning stickers.
- Where there are several sheets of cladding, place them in a lockable skip.

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment and the area with damp rags.
- Check for debris in screw or bolt holes. Clean 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

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.

OTHER HAZARDS

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

Slips and trips - see www.hse.gov.uk/slips/index.htm. Floors protected with polythene become very slippery when wet. There may also be other hazards - you need to consider them all.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Download and follow these advice sheets from 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

This document is available at 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.