

a36

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'.



Lockable skip

Removing an asbestos cement (AC) panel outside, beside or beneath a window

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove an AC panel mounted outdoors.

This sheet is NOT appropriate for an asbestos insulating board (AIB) panel or where the panel conceals asbestos insulation. Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

Caution - windows:

- Indoor panels beneath windows may be AIB. See sheet a4.
- Window sills may be made of AC. See sheet a15.
- Windows may have asbestos rope seals. See sheet a25.
- Outdoor panels are likely to be AC. Check for loose textured coatings.
- Is concealed asbestos possible? If so, ask for a survey - see 'More help'.

Preparing the work area

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

Equipment

- 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- sharp knife;
- hammer;
- webbing straps and rope;
- non-asbestos covering panel;
- 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) - see sheet em6

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



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.
- ✓ Dispose at 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.

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.

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

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.

Procedure

- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.
- Can you remove the window and panel assembly intact? Or can you remove the panels intact?
- Remove beading / nails to allow clear access to the panel. Cut beading or prise out nails. Put these in the waste container.
- If you cannot remove the panel intact, attach duct tape over the surface. Carefully break it into large pieces with the hammer.
- Lower the pieces to the ground.
- Place the sheet and debris in the lockable skip.
- Place small pieces of debris in the waste container.
- Clean the exposed surfaces with damp rags to collect dust and debris.
- Fit a non-asbestos replacement panel.

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment and the area 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.
- Place the sack in the lockable skip if you have one.
- 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.

Further information

- *Surveying, sampling and assessment of asbestos-containing materials* MDHS100 HSE Books 2001 ISBN 978 0 7176 2076 0
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/mdhs/index.htm

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** -
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:

- em1 What to do if you uncover or damage materials that could contain asbestos*
- em2 Training*
- em6 Personal protective equipment (PPE)*
- 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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Published by the Health and Safety Executive 12/07

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.