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asbestos essentials

Non-licensed tasks

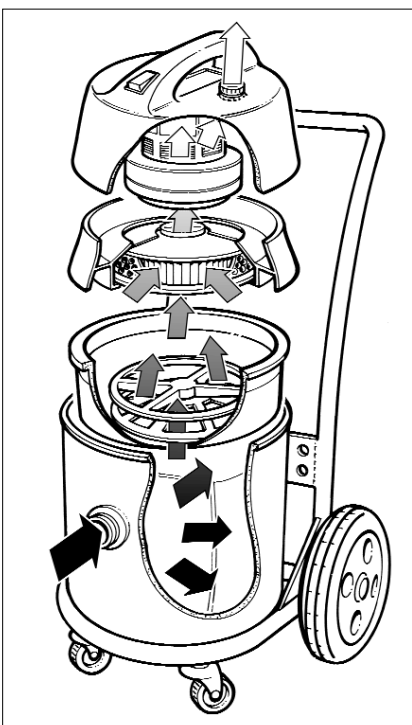
This information will help employers and the self-employed to comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006.

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

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

Remember:

- Asbestos fibres can cause lung cancer and lung diseases.
- Check that the vacuum cleaner is in good working order before you start.



Class H vacuum cleaner

Using a Class H vacuum cleaner for asbestos

Equipment and method sheet

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes the Class H vacuum cleaner, how to use it to minimise asbestos fibres released during a task, and how to use it to clean contaminated items.

The cleaner must comply with British Standards.

Never use domestic vacuum cleaners, even those fitted with HEPA (high efficiency particle arrestor) filters.

Equipment

- You can hire a Class H vacuum cleaner with a range of attachments; look up 'asbestos safety equipment hire' on the internet or see 'More help' over the page.
- Ensure hired cleaners are clean and in good working order on receipt.
- The hire company should thoroughly examine and test the cleaner at least once every six months. They need to be licensed by HSE to do this.

Procedures

Vacuuming

- Pick up bigger pieces of debris and put them in a suitable waste container.
- Vacuum clean with care; it is easy to disturb asbestos fibres, make them airborne and breathe them in.
- Wet material can damage the HEPA filter.
- Clean floors, carpets and fabrics with the adjustable floor attachment.
- Clean areas of limited access with the tapered attachment.
- Clean solid surfaces such as desk tops with the flat attachment.
- Check for damage after use.

Caution: Avoid using brush attachments for area cleaning. Brushes are difficult to clean properly.



Hire a Class H vacuum cleaner from a licensed hire company and follow all instructions

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
- **More asbestos pictures** -
www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/gallery.htm
- **British Standards** - BSI Customer Services, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL Tel: 020 8996 9001 Fax: 020 8996 7001 e-mail: cservices@bsi-global.com and at www.bsi-global.com
- **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.
ARCA's website contains a list of members who can hire equipment and offer training and other services.
- **Disposal of asbestos waste** -
www.environment-agency.co.uk,
www.sepa.org.uk/, or
www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs.
- These equipment and method sheets and task (a) sheets can be downloaded free from www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm
- See sheet a0 for details of more guidance

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.



Control measures: shadow vacuuming and using plastic enclosures as local extraction

Used as a control measure - dust extraction

- You can use the Class H vacuum cleaner to control asbestos fibres 'at source', eg:
 - Shadow vacuuming: hold the nozzle close to the task (eg screw removal).
 - Local dust extraction at the cutting point; enclose the tool (eg drill bit) with a cowl and attach the nozzle.

Possible problems

- Reduced suction:
 - You have a long extension cable, resulting in low supply voltage.
 - The waste container is full.
 - The hose has blocked. Clearing it can release asbestos; clear it carefully or get help from the hire company.

Emptying and cleaning

- Follow the hire company's instructions for waste disposal.
- Never clean inside the vacuum cleaner yourself.
- After each use, clean the vacuum cleaner's outer casing and attachments with the vacuum and then with damp rags.
- Inspect the case, hose and attachments visually.
- Keep the hose and attachments in a labelled plastic sack.
- Replace the sealing cap over the hose opening in the cleaner's casing.

Caution: You, and other people, will be exposed to high levels of asbestos fibres if you fail to take the proper precautions.

British Standards

You should only hire a Class H vacuum cleaner that conforms to the following standards. For more information on British Standards see 'More help'.

- BS EN 60335-2-69:2003 *Specification for safety of household and similar electrical appliances. Particular requirements for wet and dry vacuum cleaners, including power brush, for industrial and commercial use.* (The old standard was BS5415 - 2.2 Part 1)
- Publicly available specification, PAS 60-3:2004 *Equipment used in the controlled removal of asbestos-containing materials. Operation, cleaning and maintenance of class H vacuum cleaners. Code of practice.*

This document is available at www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm

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