Cleaning weathered asbestos cement (AC) roofing and cladding

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to clean AC cladding and roofing, either to improve its appearance or to prepare it for a surface coating.

This sheet is NOT appropriate for cleaning asbestos insulating board. Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

Preparing the work area

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

Caution: AC roofs are always fragile and cannot bear weight.

Equipment

- 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- approved biocide - see ‘Useful links’;
- scoop or trowel;
- scraper;
- proprietary cleaning machine;
- garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent;
- bucket of water and rags;
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack; and
- clear polythene sack.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) - see sheet em6

- Provide:
  - disposable overalls fitted with a hood (you may need waterproof overalls);
  - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate);
  - protective gloves. Select single use gloves; and
  - a disposable particulate respirator (eg FF P3) for manual scraping and for operating the filtration system.

- A respirator is not normally needed for an operator who is well away from the cleaning machine.
Health and Safety

Executive

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.

METHOD 1: CLEANING CLADDING ACCESSIBLE FROM GROUND LEVEL

Prepare the biocide according to the instructions on the label. Apply it by low pressure sprayer.
Allow time for the biocide to work - check the product label.
Keep the surface wet and remove growths by gentle scraping. Dead plant roots are hard to remove - leave these in place.
Scoop debris into the waste container.

METHOD 2: EMPLOY A SPECIALIST ROOF CLEANING CONTRACTOR WITH A CLEANING MACHINE

This method creates a lot of slurry that must be collected for disposal.
The contractor should:
- divert the slurry through a collection and filtration system;
- keep solid waste wet and put it in the waste container; and
- flush out the slurry collector with clean water.

Cleaning and disposal

Clean the equipment and the area with damp rags.
Put debris, used rags, polythene sheeting, paintbrush 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

OTHER HAZARDS

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

Cleaning machine

The contractor should use a collection and filter system

Procedure

- Prevent slurry entering the building. Seal gaps into the building with polythene sheeting, secured with duct tape.

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

- If necessary, remove debris first - see sheet a11.
- Only in exceptional circumstances is high pressure jetting appropriate. This requires a specialist contractor.

Cleaning and disposal

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- Put debris, used rags, polythene sheeting, paintbrush 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

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✓ Can you avoid disturbing asbestos by doing the job in some other way?
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Caution:
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- Don’t re-use disposable PPE.
- Don’t smoke.
- Don’t eat or drink in the work area.
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.

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

- For a list of approved surface biocides - www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides

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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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.