Removing an asbestos cement (AC) or reinforced plastic product, eg tank, duct, water cistern

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove an AC product (eg tank) or a plastic reinforced product (eg a bakelite cistern) from an area such as a loft.

If the article is no longer needed, but doesn’t interfere with any other installations or work, then note its location for the building owner and leave it in place.

See sheet a39 for AC flues and ducts and sheet a23 for plastic floor tiles.

If the product is attached to asbestos insulating board, see sheet em4 on shadow vacuuming and sheet a6 for minor damage repair.

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;
- screwdriver and spanners
- hammer;
- garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent;
- bucket of water and rags;
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack;
- clear polythene sack; 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.
- A respirator is not normally needed to remove a reinforced plastic product.

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’.

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.

An AC water tank
For lofts and similar areas, board out an area large enough to work on and to prevent asbestos contaminating loft insulation nearby.

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

Check that the product is not fixed to asbestos insulating board.

AC product - removal intact
- Strengthen any damaged sections with duct tape.
- Remove fittings, plumbing, etc and unscrew the product from its supports.
- Place the screws in the waste container.
- Double-wrap the product in 1000-gauge polythene sheet.
- Attach asbestos warning stickers.
- Lower to the ground carefully.

AC product - non-intact removal
- Dampen the product and wrap it in 1000-gauge polythene sheet.
- Carefully break the wrapped product with the hammer.
- If pieces are small enough, place them whole in asbestos waste containers.
- Lower large pieces to the ground. Don't drop them or use rubble chutes.
- Stack sheets carefully.
- Double-wrap large pieces in 1000-gauge polythene sheeting. Seal with duct tape.
- Attach asbestos warning stickers.

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.

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

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
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.