Removing a single (screwed-in) asbestos insulating board (AIB) ceiling tile

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove a single AIB ceiling tile.

This sheet is NOT appropriate:

- for the removal of AIB slats;
- where the tile has more than minor damage;
- where the tile is heavily painted so its removal could damage adjacent tiles; or
- if work lasts more than one hour per week for a worker, or two hours in total for two or more workers; (this includes time to set up, dismantle and clean the mini-enclosure).

Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

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

- Method 1: 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- Method 2: use a mini-enclosure if available - if not, use timber or other framework with 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape. See sheet em3.
- 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- Class H vacuum cleaner (BS EN 60335) - see sheet em4;
- sealant, eg polyvinyl acetate (PVA);
- magnet;
- screwdriver;
- non-asbestos replacement ceiling tile;
- 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;
  - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate); and
  - respiratory protective equipment.
Method 1: removing a single ceiling tile less than 0.36 square metres in area (eg 60cm x 60 cm)

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

Removal
- Locate steel screws with the magnet. Locate brass screws by careful paint scraping.
- Use ‘shadow vacuuming’ to control dust - see sheet em4.
- Unscrew - put the screws in the waste container.
- Carefully lower one end of the tile. Vacuum its upper surface.
- Spray the upper surface with PVA.
- Keep the tile flat and lower it gently.
- Place the tile in the asbestos waste container.
- If asbestos fillets are present, seal with a sealant.
- Fix a new non-asbestos tile by attaching it to a non-asbestos surface, not to asbestos fillets.

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 2: removing a single ceiling tile more than 0.36 square metres in area (eg 60cm x 60 cm)

Procedure
- Erect a proprietary ‘mini-enclosure’, or build one as described in sheet em3.

Removal
- Follow the removal instructions for method 1.
- Double-wrap the tile in 1000-gauge polythene sheeting.

Cleaning and disposal
- Clean a mini-enclosure with the Class H vacuum cleaner and dismantle it as advised in sheet em3.
- Clean the area and equipment with the Class H vacuum cleaner and damp rags.
- Put 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

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
- Take precautions to avoid falls. Must you work from a ladder? Where necessary, erect an access platform.
- Plan how to remove and handle heavy material and articles safely.
- There may also be other hazards - you need to consider them all.
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.