Laying cables in areas containing undamaged asbestos materials

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to run cables through an area containing intact asbestos lagging, insulation, insulating board or coating.

If you need to remove an asbestos insulating board (AIB) ceiling tile for access, see sheet a2.

This sheet is NOT appropriate where damaged asbestos material is present, or for cabling over a suspended AIB ceiling. 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

- 500-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
- warning tape and notices;
- adhesive spray;
- 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.

Procedure

- Wherever possible, use existing cable trays or conduits, or fix cables to non-asbestos surfaces.
- If there is no alternative to running cables near asbestos, protect the surfaces with 500-gauge polythene sheeting secured with adhesive spray or duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.
- Avoid drilling through asbestos-containing materials.
- Avoid fixing cables to anything that contains asbestos.
- Ensure that cabling only runs over the protected sections.
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

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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

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Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment 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.

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OTHER HAZARDS

Take precautions to avoid falls. Must you work from a ladder? Where necessary, erect an access platform.

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

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.
✓ Take asbestos waste to 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.

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

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