Removing a single asbestos-containing gas or electric heater

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove:

- a single gas heater (catalytic, radiant, coal- or log-effect); or
- an electric heater (storage, radiant, etc).

This sheet is NOT appropriate if the work involves asbestos insulating board and lasts more than one hour a week for a worker, or more than two hours in total for 2 or more workers. Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

You must use a CORGI-registered contractor to disconnect and make safe gas appliances.

Preparing the work area

- Have a competent electrician to isolate the appliance from the electricity supply.
- 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;
- Class H vacuum cleaner (BS EN 60335) - see sheet em4;
- screwdriver and spanners
- garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent;
- bucket of water and rags;
- asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack;
- asbestos warning stickers; 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.
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.

Procedure

- Can you remove and dispose of the appliance intact?

Caution: Some catalytic heaters contain loose asbestos mats.

Preparation
- Remove furniture and fittings from the area, or protect them from contamination using 500-gauge polythene sheet.
- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.
- Check if the appliance is attached to asbestos insulating board (AIB); sometimes, this is wall-mounted behind heaters.

Removal
- Remove the cover, wipe it with damp rags and set it aside.
- Vacuum inside the appliance. Remove with vacuuming all loose material or articles.
- Dampen the parts that may contain asbestos, eg panels, board, paper, string and fire cement.
- Unscrew or unbolt fixed parts using shadow vacuuming - see sheet em4. Put the fixings in the waste container.
- Remove panels or parts intact and put them in the waste container.
- Vacuum inside the carcass before removal. If it is attached to AIB, unscrew it using shadow vacuuming. Put the screws in the waste container.
- If fixed to AIB, see sheet a6 for repairing minor damage.
- Double-wrap the carcass and the cover with 1000-gauge polythene sheeting. Seal with duct tape. Attach asbestos warning stickers.

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment and the area with 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.

OTHER HAZARDS

Electrical hazards - see www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/index.htm. Get a competent electrician to isolate and reconnect electricity supply.

Manual handling - see www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm. Plan how to remove and handle heavy material and articles safely.

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