Removing a single asbestos insulation board (AIB) panel, less than 1m², fixed with nails or screws

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove a single AIB sheet less than 1 square metre in area.

This sheet is NOT appropriate:

■ when the AIB has more than minor damage or is heavily painted so its removal could damage adjacent panels;
■ when the AIB is in the form of ceiling tiles or slats.
■ for removing heavily nailed or centre-nailed panels;
■ for soffits;
■ for a panel larger than 1 square metre; or
■ for removing more than two small panels a week.

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- and 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape;
■ warning tape and notices;
■ Class H vacuum cleaner (BS EN 60335) - see sheet em4;
■ thick paste, eg wallpaper paste or shaving foam;
■ sealant, eg polyvinyl acetate (PVA);
■ permanent sealant
■ magnet;
■ screwdriver;
■ garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent;
■ paint brush;
■ 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.
If possible, remove nails with a claw and shadow vacuuming. If this is difficult without damaging the board, apply paste to one corner and make a deep score line so you can lever the corner away first

Procedure

- Inspect carefully. If the AIB is in good condition and is unlikely to get damaged upon removal, follow this sheet.
- If the board is badly damaged or likely to get damaged, use an HSE-licensed contractor.

Panel with nails

Caution: If the panel has nails in the centre, the job needs an HSE-licensed contractor.

- Erect a mini-enclosure - see sheet em3.
- If you can remove nails with the claw, do so with ‘shadow vacuuming’ - see sheet em4.
- If this is not possible you need to break the panel across one corner. Cover the intended break line with paste/foam.
- Deeply score the panel across one nailed corner through the paste / foam.
- Lever to break the panel at the scored line - hold the vacuum nozzle near to the break to collect as much dust as possible.
- Ease the panel away to loosen other nails, and remove these with shadow vacuuming.
- Remove the panel and vacuum all newly-exposed surfaces.

Panel with screws

- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.
- 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.
- Ease the panel away. Vacuum its newly-exposed surfaces and screw holes.

All panels

- Spray the panel with PVA.
- Double-wrap large panels with 1000-gauge polythene sheeting; place smaller boards in the waste container.
- Attach asbestos warning stickers.
- Gently paint newly-exposed surfaces and screw holes with sealant paint.

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


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.

Use shadow vacuuming to control dust as you remove screws
Cleaning and disposal

- Clean any newly-exposed surfaces with the Class H vacuum cleaner.
- 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 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

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.