

emoasbestos
essentials

Risk assessments and plans of work

Equipment and method sheet

Non-licensed tasks

Remember:

- Asbestos fibres can cause fatal lung disease and lung cancer.
- Read the safety checklist and sheet a0.
- You must be trained to work safely with asbestos materials.
- Can you do the work some other way?
- Does the risk assessment highlight the need for a licensed contractor?

What this sheet covers

Before commencing any work on asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) a risk assessment must be carried out to assess the potential risk of exposure to asbestos, and appropriate steps put in place to prevent or reduce exposure.

The guidance and appropriate task sheet can be used to form part of your risk assessment and plan of work. Where there are no asbestos risks – and tasks that differ from those in these sheets – further risk assessment will be required.

The risk assessment process is set out below.

Risk assessment

Before starting any work that is likely to disturb asbestos, a suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be arranged by the employer.

Whoever carries out the risk assessment must:

- be competent to do the risk assessment (have sufficient knowledge, training and expertise);
- carry it out before work begins and allow enough time to put appropriate precautions in place;
- make sure the assessment is job specific and consider all aspects of the work.

The risk assessment must:

- establish the potential risks (including general risks such as falls from height and electrical hazards as well as those from asbestos) and identify who may be affected;
- identify the action to be taken to remove the risk or, if that is not possible, to reduce the risk to as low as possible;
- record the findings of the risk assessment – and the action to be taken – and inform employees;
- implement the actions to be taken;
- review and update the risk assessment as required.

Other hazards

Other specific hazards appear in the checklist on each *Asbestos essentials* task sheet. They include:

Work on fragile roofs: Fragile roofs cannot bear weight – see www.hse.gov.uk/construction

Work at height: Take precautions to avoid falls – see www.hse.gov.uk/falls

Electrical hazards: Get a competent electrician to isolate and reconnect the electricity supply – see www.hse.gov.uk/electricity

Gas safety: Check your contractor's registration at www.gassaferegister.co.uk

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

Slips and trips: Floors protected with polythene become very slippery when wet – see www.hse.gov.uk/slips

Confined spaces: You need to know that restricted workplaces are safe to enter and the air is fit to breathe – see www.hse.gov.uk/confinedspace

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

Content of the risk assessment

A risk assessment should include full details of the work to be carried out and how long the work is expected to take. It should also include:

- details of the type and quantity of the asbestos;
- details of the expected level of exposure;
- details of the controls to be used to reduce exposure, eg use of controlled wetting, adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) or respiratory protective equipment (RPE), or use of enclosures;
- decontamination procedures for tools, equipment and PPE;
- details on how asbestos waste will be managed and disposed of as hazardous waste (see em9);
- emergency procedures (see em1).

The findings of the assessment should be communicated to employees and anybody else who could be affected. A copy of the risk assessment must be available on site.

Plan of work

Prepare a short plan of work (also known as a method statement). See equipment and method (em) sheets for useful advice to help you prepare this plan. If the work is notifiable, your copy of the notification may help you.

Make sure the plan includes the following:

- what the work is, and how long it is likely to last;
- the address and description of the job;
- when the work will be done;
- the procedures to follow to reduce exposure and prevent the spread of asbestos, ie by following the *Asbestos essentials* task sheets and the order of control methods;
- the equipment needed, including PPE;
- decontamination and waste disposal arrangements;
- emergency procedures.

Order of control methods

Where possible, avoid working on or disturbing ACMs. Where this cannot be avoided, use control methods in the following order:

- controlled wetting of ACM;
- removal of whole/intact material minimising breakages;
- shadow vacuuming to control exposure at source;
- suitable PPE including RPE.

Make sure that everyone involved is fully aware of the plan and knows:

- what they need to do;
- how to wear their PPE and RPE correctly;
- why each action is being taken;
- what to do in the case of emergencies and accidents.

Manage the work

Monitor the work to ensure it is being carried out with the appropriate controls in place and that controls are being used correctly.

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, 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.

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

© Crown copyright If you wish to reuse this information visit www.hse.gov.uk/copyright.htm for details. First published as part of *Asbestos essentials task manual* 2001.