

MAGB HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT GROUP



Guide to Managing Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's)

***SCOPE:** This document represents best practice advice available and considered pertinent after consultation within the membership and incorporating HSE guidance. It is intended to assist member companies to understand their responsibilities for the management of ACM's on their premises.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Asbestos refers to a number of naturally occurring minerals. Asbestos minerals are made up of fine, durable fibers and are resistant to heat, fire and many chemicals. Due to these properties asbestos was widely used in everyday products, from building materials to fireproof protective equipment.

It is now known that exposure to asbestos can cause mesothelioma, a fatal cancer that affects the lining of the lungs, as well as other cancers and lung-related illnesses. However, it can only pose a health risk if the fibres become airborne and are inhaled. It can take up to as long as 60 years from the first exposure to the onset of the disease.

All asbestos use was prohibited in the UK in 1999, so for buildings built or refurbished before 2000 it can be reasonably assumed that asbestos is present. The most commonly used types of asbestos fall into three categories:

- 1) Chrysotile (commonly known as white asbestos)
- 2) Crocidolite (commonly known as blue asbestos)
- 3) Amosite (commonly known as brown asbestos)

Brown & Blue asbestos are more hazardous than White; however, all are classed as carcinogens and despite their names they cannot be identified by just their colour.

2. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to ensure the health and safety of all employees and visitors (including contractors) to their sites.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks for all work activities.

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 requires duty holders to understand and manage their asbestos risks. This includes:

- Take reasonable steps to find materials in their premises likely to contain asbestos and to check their condition.
- Presume that materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence to suppose that they do not.

- Make a written record of the location and condition of asbestos and presumed asbestos-containing materials (ACM'S) and keep the record up to date.
- Assess the risk of the likelihood of anyone being exposed to these materials; and
- Prepare a plan to manage that risk and put it into effect to ensure that any material known or presumed to contain asbestos is kept in a good state of repair; subject to regular inspections, keep records indefinitely. No materials found to contain asbestos are removed without first carrying out a risk assessment and undertaken by trained personnel or in the case of Licensed Work by licensed contractors, (see 3.1 Licensed Work).

Information on the location and condition of the material is given to anyone potentially at risk including employees, the occupier of rented buildings, the emergency services and contractors.

- Refurbishment works will not be undertaken until a refurbishment and demolition survey has been undertaken.
- Ensure emergency arrangements are in place in the event that ACM's are disturbed.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ASBESTOS WORK

Not all work involving asbestos requires a license or is notifiable under the regulations – the following information has been taken from the regulations. However, members should always satisfy themselves when work is to be carried out on ACMs, which category the work falls into.

3.1 Licensed Work

Certain types of work with ACMs can only be done by those who have been issued with a licence by the HSE. This is work which meets the definition of 'licensable work with asbestos' in regulation 2(1). That is work:

- where worker exposure to asbestos is not sporadic and of low intensity; or
- where the risk assessment cannot clearly demonstrate that the control limit (0.1 f/cm3 airborne fibres averaged over a four-hour period) will not be exceeded; or
- on asbestos coating (surface coatings which contain asbestos for fire protection, heat insulation or sound insulation but not including textured decorative coatings); or
- on asbestos insulation or Asbestos Insulating Board (AIB) where the risk assessment demonstrates that the work is not sporadic and of low intensity, the control limit will be exceeded, and it is not short duration work.

Work Requiring a License from the HSE	Work that does not usually require a License from the HSE
Removing sprayed coatings (limpet asbestos)	Small, short duration maintenance tasks where the control limits will not be exceeded
Removal or other work which may disturb pipe lagging	
Any work involving loose fill insulation	Removing textured decorative coatings by any suitable dust-reducing method
Work on millboard	Cleaning up small quantities of loose/ fine debris containing ACM dust (where the work is sporadic and of low intensity, the control limit will not be exceeded, and it is
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control limit will be exceeded, or it is not short duration work)	short duration work)
Work on AIB, where the risk assessment indicates that it will not be of short duration	Work on asbestos cement products or other materials containing asbestos (such as paints, bitumen, resins, rubber, etc) where the fibres are bound in a matrix which prevents most of them being released (this includes, typically, aged/weathered AC)
	Work associated with collecting and analysing samples to identify the presence of asbestos

All non-licensable work with asbestos will still need to be carried out in accordance with the requirements contained in the Regulations. In particular, it needs to be carried out by trained and competent workers in accordance with a plan of work, using appropriate control measures to prevent exposure and the spread of asbestos.

3.2 NOTIFIABLE NON-LICENSED WORK (NNLW)

This is work that is being carried out that does not require a license from the HSE but is still notifiable under the regulations. Again, members should always satisfy themselves when work is to be carried out on ACMs, which category the work falls into.

Examples of non-licensable work that will normally be NNLW

Removal of asbestos cement products (e.g. roof sheeting) which are substantially damaged or broken up (e.g. as a result of fire or flood).

Removal of asbestos cement products (e.g. roof sheeting) where the material will be substantially broken up, creating significant quantities of dust and debris (e.g. 'dropping' an asbestos cement roof).

Large-scale removal of textured decorative coatings using steaming or gelling methods (e.g. beyond that required for maintenance activities such as installation/ replacement of smoke alarms and light fittings).

Short duration (< 2 hours) work to remove AIB as part of demolition or major refurbishment.

Short duration (< 2 hours) work on asbestos insulation.

3.3 NON-LICENSED WORK

This is work that is being carried out that does not require a license from the HSE and is not normally notifiable under the regulations. Again, members should always satisfy themselves when work is to be carried out on ACMs, which category the work falls into.

Examples of non-licensable work that will not normally be NNLW

Removal of asbestos cement products, (e.g. roof sheeting and rainwater goods) provided the material is carefully handled/removed without breaking up; this includes work with asbestos cement which is weathered but not otherwise substantially damaged.

Maintenance work involving asbestos cement products (e.g. on roof sheeting and rainwater

goods).

Removal of small areas of textured decorative coatings using gel/steam, to support other activities such as installation/replacement of smoke alarms and light fittings.

Removal without deterioration, of textured decorative coatings (e.g. if the backing board is carefully cut around to achieve virtually intact removal).

Drilling of textured decorative coatings for installation of fixtures/fittings.

Encapsulation and sealing-in work on ACMs that are in good condition (e.g. repairing damaged sealing material).

Removal and reattachment of loosely fixed (e.g. screwed) AIB panels in order to gain access to areas for other maintenance activities (e.g. under a bath to carry out pipework maintenance, or for access to a ceiling void for repair of lighting).

Painting/repainting AIB.

Short duration work to repair minor damage to AIB.

Short duration work involving drilling holes in AIB (e.g. when installing shelving).

Maintenance work involving asbestos in ropes, yarns and woven cloth.

Maintenance work on asbestos gaskets (including removal as part of repair and upkeep of equipment).

Maintenance work involving asbestos-containing thermoplastic and vinyl floor tiles, bitumen roof felt, shingles, damp-proofing coatings, mastics.

Maintenance of asbestos-containing felt and paper.

Maintenance work involving plastic paint coatings, PVC floors, panels and sealing compounds.

Maintenance of asbestos-containing conveyor belts/drive belts, bonded rubber, electric cable.

Maintenance of resin-based ACMs such as friction products (e.g. brake linings).

Air and bulk sampling for asbestos fibre.

Source HSE

4. MANAGEMENT OF ASBESTOS WASTE

All waste asbestos should be labelled and disposed of in accordance with Waste Management legislation and the consignment notes retained.

Guidance from the regulations state;

- It should be securely sealed in suitable, labelled bags, wrapping or packaging as it is produced.
- Any bags, wrapping or packaging used must be designed, constructed and maintained to make sure that no asbestos fibres can be released during handling or transport.
- For most waste, double plastic sacks are suitable, provided they will not split during normal use.
- Stronger packages must be used if the waste contains sharp metal fragments or other materials that could puncture plastic sacks.
- Any waste where the escape of hazardous quantities of respirable asbestos fibres can occur during carriage should be placed in UN-approved packaging.
- If the asbestos waste is not to be disposed of immediately, the sealed bags and packages should be locked in a suitable and clearly marked storage area, i.e. a lockable skip.
- Bags, wrapping or packaging containing asbestos waste should be appropriately labelled and transported to a licensed disposal site. A list of disposal sites is available from local authorities.
- Asbestos waste should be transported in an enclosed vehicle, skip or freight container.

- Asbestos waste must be transported in accordance with the specific requirements of the Hazardous Waste Regulations in England and Wales and the Special Waste Regulations in Scotland.

5. INFORMATION AND TRAINING

Workers and Supervisors must be able to recognise asbestos containing materials (ACMs) and know what to do if they come across them, in order to protect themselves and others.

There are three main levels of information and training. These relate to:

- **Asbestos Awareness:** The properties of asbestos and its effects on health, including the increased risk of developing lung cancer for asbestos workers who smoke. The types, uses and likely occurrence of asbestos and asbestos materials in buildings and plant. The general procedures to deal with an emergency, eg an uncontrolled release of asbestos dust into the workplace. How to avoid the risk of exposure to asbestos.
- **Non-licensable work with asbestos including>NNLW:** How to make suitable and sufficient assessments about the risk of exposure to asbestos. Safe work practices and control measures, including an explanation of the correct use of control measures, protective equipment and work methods. Selection and appropriate use of protective equipment. Waste handling procedures and emergency procedures. Relevant legal requirements and circumstances when non-licensed work may be notifiable (ie>NNLW).
- **Licensable work with asbestos:** Most work with higher risk asbestos-containing materials must be carried out by licensed contractors. Only competent workers and managers, provided with suitable information instruction and training and using appropriate respiratory and other protective equipment, may undertake licensed asbestos work. Further information on providing information instruction and training for licensable work can be found in The Licensed Contractors Guide HSG 247.

For further information relating to Information, Instruction and Training visit the HSE Website.

Source HSE

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

The following HSE publications will provide further advice (other information is also available on the HSE website):

- *The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, The ACOP & Guidance text. HSE Books ISBN: 9780717666188. L143 2nd Edition.*
- *Managing Asbestos in Buildings – A Brief Guide – Leaflet INDG223(rev 5) HSE Books ISBN: 9780717664870(£5 for a pack of 5)*
- *A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace – Leaflet INDG163 (rev 4) HSE Books 2014 ISBN 9780717664634*
- *Asbestos Essentials, HSG 210(3rd Edition) – Free to download or £15 to purchase ISBN 9780717665037*
- *Respiratory Protection Equipment at Work (4th Edition) – Free to download or £15 to purchase ISBN 9780717664542*