



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH and SAFETY

Standard Work Procedure #1.0

The Control of Asbestos Fibres During Low Risk Operations: Ceiling Access where Asbestos-Containing Material is Likely to be Lying on the Surface of the Ceiling.

Application:

These safe work procedures pertain to situations where access is needed to a ceiling space, above a suspended ceiling system, where asbestos-containing fireproofing, thermal insulation, or surfacing material is likely to be present. If dust/debris have fallen from the ACM and is collected on top of the ceiling tiles it could be disturbed when a tile is lifted and cause asbestos fibres to be released into the air. These work practices are intended to prevent/control this disturbance. Only personnel who are trained in asbestos awareness and the appropriate safe work procedures can perform work in the ceiling spaces of buildings with asbestos-containing materials.

The safe work procedures listed below are classified according to the different levels of control measures that are required dependent upon the amount of debris and dust that is likely or suspected to be present on the top of the ceiling. Three levels of safe work procedures are identified:

Level A work practices should only be used when the ACM surfacing material above the suspended ceiling is known to be in good condition, debris/dust is not suspected to be present on top of the tiles, and ACM above the ceiling will not be disturbed when the tile is lifted.

Level B work practices pertain to ceiling spaces where ACM surfacing material is present and is in good condition, but it is suspected that a small amount of loose dust/debris may be present on top of the ceiling tiles (that does not fall out when the tile is lifted). These procedures mainly consist of carefully lifting tiles to minimize disturbance and use of a HEPA vacuum to collect debris and any airborne fibres at the point of release. These procedures also apply to ceiling spaces where it is unknown whether or not there is dust/debris on top of the tiles and the condition of ACM is unknown. Therefore, in this case, these procedures should be used initially for exploratory purposes.

Level C work practices are applicable to situations where there is enough ACM debris on top of the ceiling tiles that level B practices cannot reliably maintain airborne fibre levels below the occupational exposure limit or if fallout of dust/debris cannot be adequately controlled. In this case an enclosure and negative pressure is required to draw airborne fibres away from the plenum.

Materials and Equipment

Ladder or scaffold for elevated work

Wet wipes or bucket with clean water for wet wiping
Mist bottle with water
Drop cloth
Hard hat
Safety glasses
Half face respirator with P100 filters
Protective clothing
Safety boots
Other tools needed to do the required work

Procedure - General

Notification

When appropriate, local-area occupants and/or other building occupants/users shall be notified of planned activities involving asbestos. The notification should include a description of the project/work to be completed, the general precautionary measures required to maintain a safe work environment, and the proposed duration of the work.

Access

Access must also be restricted in areas where ceiling tiles are being lifted and work is being performed in the ceiling space. Only individuals doing the work shall be present. This should be done by vacating the area, locking doors, setting up temporary barriers, etc., to prevent others from entering the immediate vicinity of the work area. DO NOT block access to emergency exits.

Level A Procedure

1. Obtain materials and equipment needed for the work to be done and place in the work area.
2. Secure access to the work area, as indicated above, and clear immediate work area of all moveable furnishings or equipment.
3. When necessary shut off and lock out any HVAC or electrical systems to be worked on.
4. Place drop cloth, ladder or scaffold in the work area beneath the tile that is to be lifted.
5. Don PPE.
6. Place the ladder or scaffold in the work area (on top of the drop cloth) beneath the tile that is to be lifted.
7. Carefully raise the edge of the access tile. If the tile is obstructed by wires, ducts, conduits etc., move to another panel. DO NOT force the tile to lift it.
8. Keep panel as flat as possible while lifting slightly above grid system. Slowly slide tile to one side so that it is lying on top of an adjacent panel.
9. Before starting work perform a visual inspection of the ceiling space. Check the location and condition of any potential ACM in the space.
10. Carefully replace the ceiling tile upon completion of the work.
11. Ensure that any dust/debris created during the work (e.g. from the non-ACM ceiling tiles) is cleaned up before you exit the work area.

Level B Procedure

1. Obtain materials and equipment needed for the work to be done and place in the work area.
2. Secure access to the work area, as indicated above, and clear immediate work area of all moveable furnishings or equipment. Any furnishing or equipment that cannot be removed shall be adequately covered and sealed using 6 ml. Polyethylene and tape.

3. When necessary shut off, lock out any HVAC or electrical systems to be worked on.
4. Place drop cloth, ladder or scaffold in the work area beneath the tile that is to be lifted.
5. Don PPE.
6. Use the HEPA vacuum to vacuum around the edges of all tiles to be removed.
7. Slowly lift one edge of the ceiling tile while holding the nozzle of the HEPA vacuum in the vicinity. Immediately HEPA vacuum the space at the lifted edge.
8. Continue to lift the entire tile in a manner such that any potential debris or objects on top of the tile will slide away from you. Slowly move the access tile to the side and lay in on an adjacent panel.
9. HEPA vacuum all four sides of the grid.
10. Thoroughly HEPA vacuum the top of the access tile, and also clean up any fallen material on surfaces adjacent to the access tile (within arm's reach) including, for example, adjacent ceiling tiles, light fixtures, ducts, T-bar, etc.
11. Remove ceiling tiles as required while constantly vacuuming all four edges of the tile and suspension system.
12. When the work in the ceiling space is complete replace the ceiling tiles and HEPA vacuum the lower surface of the access tile before it is replaced.
13. Vacuum your head, arms, and shoulders before climbing down.
14. HEPA vacuum ladder/scaffold.
15. HEPA vacuum the outside of any asbestos waste bags, and when applicable, dispose of asbestos waste as per the MUN asbestos waste disposal policy/procedure.
16. Clean your tools, equipment and work area using wet wiping methods and/or HEPA vacuuming.
17. Remove protective clothing and respirator.
18. Restore area to normal accessibility.
19. Report any ACM noted to be in poor condition to the Asbestos Management Coordinator as soon as possible.

Level C Procedure

Ceiling spaces that are suspected to contain enough asbestos-containing dust/debris to warrant level C procedures will be cleaned up by a qualified abatement contractor before work proceeds in these spaces.