

a23

asbestos essentials

Non-licensed tasks

Essential information

Important: You must read sheet a0 *Introduction to asbestos essentials*

Also read the following sheets:

em0 Risk assessments and plans of work

em1 What to do if you discover or accidentally disturb asbestos during your work

em2 Information, instruction and training

em4 Using a Class H vacuum cleaner for asbestos

em5 Wetting asbestos materials

em6 Personal protective equipment (including RPE)

em7 Using damp rags to clean surfaces of minor asbestos contamination

em8 Personal decontamination

em9 Disposal of asbestos waste

Removing asbestos-containing floor tiles and mastic

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove floor tiles that contain asbestos.

These may also have asbestos-paper backing, or be fixed with asbestos-containing mastic.

Removal of floor tiles with an asbestos-paper backing will be notifiable non-licensed work (NNLW) – see sheet a0 *Introduction to asbestos essentials*.

Preparing the work area

- Restrict access – minimise the number of people present.
- Close doors. Use tape and notices to warn others.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Equipment

- Warning tape and notices
- Class H vacuum cleaner (BS 8520) (if available – see sheet em4) for large areas
- Sharp knife
- Hammer
- Scraper
- Shovel
- Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
- Bucket of water and rags
- Asbestos waste bag
- Clear polythene bag



Floor tiles that contain asbestos can also have asbestos-paper backing, or be fixed with asbestos-containing mastic

Caution

Never sand the floor.

Other hazards

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

Personal protective equipment (PPE) – see sheet em6

- Provide:
 - disposable overalls fitted with a hood;
 - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate);
 - respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

Procedure**Overlaying**

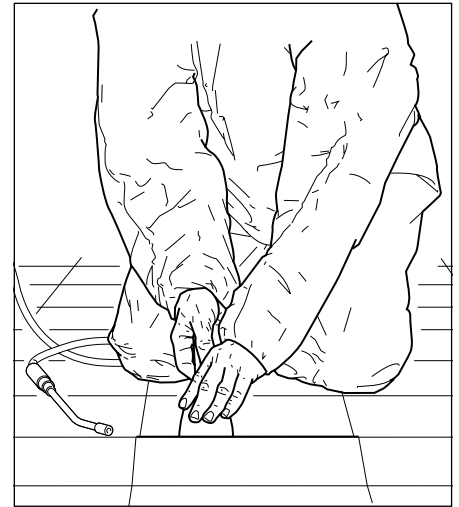
- Can you avoid removal, eg by overlaying with non-asbestos material?
- Warn the building owner about the presence of asbestos material you have covered by overlaying, so it can be managed properly.

Removal

- Place the scraper in the joint between the tiles. Lift the tile gently – try to avoid breakage.
- For firmly-fixed tiles, tap the scraper with the hammer.
- For a large tiled area, lift tiles using a shovel. This speeds up the job and avoids kneeling close to the tiles.
- Spray water under the tiles as they are lifted, to suppress dust and wet any asbestos paper that may be present. See also sheet a17.
- Wet any asbestos paper tile backing as the tiles are lifted.
- Gently scrape up adhering mastic. You can soften mastic with solvent, by warming with an infra-red lamp, or embrittle it with dry ice.
- Place debris in the asbestos waste bag.



Asbestos-containing mastic



Spray water under the tiles to suppress dust as you lift them gently, avoiding breakage

Cleaning and disposal

- Where you have removed only a few tiles, use damp rags to clean the floor. Clean larger areas with the Class H vacuum cleaner (if available) and/or damp rags.
- Clean the equipment with damp rags.
- Put debris, used rags and other waste in the asbestos waste bag and tape it closed.
- Put the asbestos waste bag in a clear polythene bag 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, dutyholder or client to check off the job.

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