

Safe handling of asbestos waste at civic amenity (CA) sites

This 'best practice' was written in consultation and with the support of the Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum (WISH).

Introduction

This guidance is for civic amenity (CA) site managers to enable them to eliminate/reduce the risks associated with receiving and handling asbestos cement waste at their sites. It covers situations when employees may handle asbestos cement waste or manage its disposal at CA sites. It should be read in conjunction with *Work with materials containing asbestos. Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2006. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L143*.

It **does not** cover the planned reception and acceptance of other friable asbestos wastes (eg lagging etc), but gives advice on its inadvertent reception and what to do if it is discovered. Such waste should be handled according to the advice given on the HSE website (see *Further reading*).

This best practice aims to ensure that:

- all asbestos cement waste is appropriately handled during acceptance on CA sites, thereby minimising the risk to employees; and
- all employees have an understanding of the guidance and regulations covering asbestos waste.

Involving your employees

You should consult your staff regarding the health and safety of your working practices. The support of site staff is essential to ensure safe working. Safety representatives and other staff can contribute positively towards safe procedures:

- identifying problems;
- indicating whether activities can be carried out safely under prevailing conditions; and
- generating sound practical ideas and solutions.

Equally, it is important that they are supported to raise or maintain their level of competence to safely and effectively carry out their duties.

Training

Suitable training is required to enable staff to identify asbestos and to ensure that they are competent to accept and handle asbestos cement waste safely. The training should ensure that they understand what asbestos is (the different types of asbestos) and what the risks and health effects are from exposure to asbestos.

Detailed advice on the training of workers is given in *Work with materials containing asbestos* L143.

Safe site and equipment

All CA sites that accept asbestos cement waste from the general public should have suitable facilities and resources to accept this waste. This may include, but is not restricted to, the following:

- signs should be posted at the site entrance and at the asbestos cement skip(s) asking members of the public with asbestos cement products to notify site staff before unloading;
- a lockable skip/waste container with well fitting doors;
- the skip should be kept locked when not in immediate use – this includes during the working day. This will ensure the disposal of waste into these skips can be controlled;
- skips used for asbestos cement waste should be clearly labelled with a sign on the skip, preferably on its door(s), stating 'Asbestos Cement Waste Only'. Skips containing asbestos cement products should be marked with the appropriate 'Warning Contains Asbestos' label (see Schedule 2 of *Work with materials containing asbestos* L143);
- skips containing asbestos cement should be located remotely from other waste containers, where reasonably practicable. This enables the disposal of asbestos cement waste to be managed in a segregated area away from the public involved in the disposal of other wastes;
- sufficient trained and competent staff to accept asbestos cement;
- adequate stocks of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other equipment such as water damping sprays;
- a hose, fitted with a sprinkler head to 'damp-down' the waste should be located near the skip/container;
- details and records of the control and disposal of asbestos waste may need to be kept. You may need to contact other regulatory authorities for guidance on the information they may require you to keep.

Safe reception of asbestos cement waste on site

This document deals only with the handling of asbestos cement. However, you should have a policy and emergency plan for dealing with other non-bonded asbestos types (eg lagging) that may be brought onto site.

- Members of the public should be encouraged to make prior arrangements for the delivery of asbestos cement waste to your site.
- The public should be advised that asbestos cement should be double-bagged or suitably double-wrapped before being brought to the site.
- Deliveries should be checked by staff trained in asbestos recognition and handling.
- Some civic amenity site operators have found it advantageous to provide the public with suitable bags for the asbestos cement, and/or suitable plastic sheeting, before they arrive on site.
- Householders should be advised not to break or cut the asbestos cement to fit plastic bags, but to double-wrap it in plastic sheeting and to damp the sheeting with water to help prevent the release of asbestos cement fibres.
- It is good practice to dedicate a number of skips or containers for storing asbestos cement waste. Skips should be cleaned out to remove all visible debris once they have delivered their load to the licensed tip. Waste water from this process should be filtered and any residue should be disposed of as asbestos cement waste.

- Bags and sheeting will also be needed on the CA site to deal with any spillages or unauthorised dumping of asbestos waste.
- The container door should be damped down before opening. It should then be unlocked and the contents damped carefully to avoid dust being created when the new material is introduced.
- To reduce the risk of fibres being disturbed and becoming airborne, waste should be placed as gently as reasonably possible, rather than being thrown violently into the skip.
- Once the material has been placed in the container, the waste should be damped again (as above) and the container closed and locked.

If the material looks damaged, friable or is fibrous asbestos, such as lagging, then a site operative should put on a disposable suit, gloves, goggles and a FFP3 dust mask to place the material into the container. Such materials should be damped before being placed in the container.

Fibrous asbestos cement should be double-bagged using 'UN'-type approved bags and once on site should be stored in a closed, lockable and labelled skip.

All materials believed to contain asbestos should only be stored in the containers designated for asbestos waste.

Personal protective equipment

All employees involved in the handling of asbestos waste should be provided with suitable and appropriate PPE to enable them to carry out the work safely, such as:

- disposable overalls (type 5) fitted with a hood;
- waterproof overalls may be required outside;
- boots without laces (laced boots can be difficult to decontaminate); and
- disposable particulate respirator (FFP3) (worn according to manufacturer's instructions).

Only where the level of risk has been established and controlled (eg where the waste is double-bagged and sealed in approved-type bags) should lesser standards of PPE be considered.

All PPE should be inspected before use, and any defects reported and rectified. No work should be carried out without the appropriate PPE and other equipment, such as a damping spray, being in place.

When putting on PPE, employees should put the facemask on under the hood of the overalls and not over the hood.

Asbestos cement spillage procedures

It is foreseeable that asbestos cement waste may be presented inappropriately bagged, or that the containment packaging splits on site. In these circumstances, the following precautions should be taken:

- clear the area of non-essential personnel;
- put on PPE;
- cordon off the area using cones, bunting and signs;

- dampen down the area to prevent particles becoming airborne;
- re-wrap the asbestos cement in bags or plastic sheeting and seal with tape;
- place wrapped asbestos into asbestos skip;
- the asbestos symbol 'Warning Contains Asbestos' (as per Schedule 2 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002) should be displayed wherever asbestos waste is contained (eg bags, skips, wrappings etc).

If an emergency situation arises beyond the training and expertise of CA site staff, eg where there is gross contamination with loose asbestos cement insulation board or lagging that has been dumped in general waste skips or discarded elsewhere on site, then the area should be cleared of people and cordoned off. Procedures should exist to obtain expert advice and assistance to evaluate the risk and to decontaminate the area if necessary.

Personal decontamination

When personal protective equipment is contaminated, care should be taken to avoid disturbing any fibres:

- 1 Remove protective overalls by rolling inside out carefully and place them in a bag for asbestos waste.
- 2 Remove over-boots and place into the asbestos waste bag, or wash down boots/Wellingtons.
- 3 Remove gloves (by rolling inside out) avoiding skin contact and dispose of them in the asbestos waste bag.
- 4 The mask should be removed last to avoid inhaling asbestos cement fibres while removing other PPE. Disposable masks should be disposed of in the asbestos waste bag. If using a FFP3 half mask, remove it and clean with wet wipes or similar.
- 5 Finally, the asbestos waste bag should be securely taped ready for storage in the asbestos waste container. Potentially contaminated PPE should not be left at the work area and should never be taken home.

The Waste Industry Safety and Health forum (WISH) exists to communicate and consult with key stakeholders, including local and national government bodies, equipment manufacturers, trade associations, professional associations and trades unions. The aim of WISH is to identify, devise and promote activities which can improve industry health and safety performance.

References and further reading

Work with materials containing asbestos. Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L143 HSE Books 2006
ISBN 978 0 7176 6206 7

Asbestos essentials task manual: Task guidance sheets for the building maintenance and allied trades HSG210 HSE Books 2001
ISBN 978 0 7176 1887 3

A short guide to managing asbestos in premises Leaflet INDG223(rev3) HSE Books 2002 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 2564 2) Web version: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg223.pdf

Asbestos alert for building maintenance, repair and refurbishment workers: Be aware of asbestos the hidden killer Pocket card INDG188 HSE Books 1995 (single copy free or priced packs of 25 ISBN 978 0 7176 1209 3) Web version: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg188.pdf

Asbestos dust kills - keep your mask on: Guidance for employees on wearing respiratory protective equipment for work with asbestos Leaflet INDG255(rev1) HSE Books 1999 (single copy free or priced packs of 20 ISBN 978 0 7176 1696 1) Web version: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg255.pdf

Asbestos: Medical guidance note Medical Guidance Note MS13 (Fourth edition) HSE Books 2005 ISBN 978 0 7176 2952 7

Managing asbestos: Your new legal duties Leaflet HSE Books 2003 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/manageasbestos.pdf
(A joint leaflet produced by Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, Federation of Small Business, Asbestos Testing and Consulting division of ARCA and HSE)

Fit testing of respiratory protective equipment facepieces Operational Circular OC 282/28 HSE 2003 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/fittesting.pdf

HSE website

Waste management: www.hse.gov.uk/waste
Asbestos: www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos
Risk assessment: www.hse.gov.uk/risk

Further information

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For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

This document contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

This document is available web-only at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/waste07.pdf

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