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| **Asbestos** |
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| **Procedure** |
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# PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this procedure is to;

* control the risk from Company operations
* comply with statutory obligations placed upon the employer

1. In doing so, the company aims to protect persons from hazards associated with the works including, but not limited too;

* Exposure of persons to asbestos fibre

# RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Line Manager or Supervisor appointed has the responsibility, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure;

* that everyone who may be affected by the operation of this work equipment is aware of this procedure and adheres to it.
* that every employee has a safe place of work with safe access and egress.
* that only those authorised have access to and the use of, work equipment.
* that methods and equipment selected are suitable for purpose and meet all required standards and obligations.
* that operatives are physically and mentally suitable for their allotted tasks.
* that operatives are informed, instructed, trained and competent for their allotted task.
* that sufficient and suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) is identified, supplied and maintained and that users are trained in its use and upkeep.
* that all necessary checks, inspections, examinations and tests on work equipment, safety systems and the environment are conducted in the prescribed manner and recorded as necessary.
* Work Operatives have the responsibility, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure;
* that they are aware the procedure for safe operation and adhere to it.
* that any person who may be affected by the operation has been warned and is safe from health and safety risk resulting from the operation.
* that the work equipment that they select is suitable for purpose.
* that they are physically and mentally suitable for their allotted task.
* that they are trained and competent in their allotted task.
* that they correctly use and maintain identified PPE when necessary.
* that all necessary checks, inspections, examinations and tests on work equipment, safety systems and the environment have been completed.
* that they carry out a visual examination of work equipment prior to its use.
* that all safety devices, guards, etc. are fully operational and correctly set before they use work equipment.
* that the work equipment is left in a clean and safe condition after use.
* that they report all defects immediately and prevent the use of defective or dangerous work equipment by others.

# CHECKS AND INSPECTIONS

1. Examination of building asbestos register.
2. Visual examination of work areas for potential asbestos material prior to commencement of any intrusive work.

# DEFINITIONS

1. *ASBESTOS* - Any of the naturally occurring fibrous silicate materials. Asbestos is made up of microscopic bundles of fibres that may become airborne when asbestos-containing materials are damaged or disturbed. When these fibres get into the air they may be inhaled into the lungs, where they can cause significant health problems.

# Training

1. All operatives will have had Asbestos Awareness training which will be refreshed every year.

# OPERATING PRACTICES - GENERAL

1. Asbestos cannot be accurately identified without the use of laboratory procedures.
2. Any material exposed during work procedures and suspected of containing asbestos will be regarded as asbestos until it has been analysed and declared asbestos free by an accredited laboratory.
3. No work will be carried out in areas where the potential for the disturbance of asbestos containing material has been identified.
4. Where asbestos is suspected, the site supervisor will have the authority to stop work to any extent necessary to prevent the potential exposure of any person.

# SUSPECT SOURCES

1. In the event of any person believing that they have identified or exposed a material which might potentially contain asbestos;
2. The site supervisor will be informed immediately.
3. If he is not immediately available, the most senior operative will assume control and act as if he were the site supervisor.
4. The site supervisor will carry out an immediate visual inspection and confirm the suspicion.
5. Where he confirms the suspicion, the site supervisor will inform the Principal Contractor or Client’s representative by the fastest possible means.
6. The site supervisor will inform the supervisors of all other contractors working in the area.
7. The site supervisor will withdraw all labour from the suspect area. Potentially contaminated tools and equipment will be in the area.
8. Where personal contamination is suspected, then those affected will be removed to the open air where any potentially contaminated clothing will be removed and double bagged. Gross contamination should be removed by vacuum cleaner fitted with an appropriate filter.
9. Those affected and any persons rendering assistance should be protected by suitable respiratory protective equipment during the handling of contaminated clothing or materials.

# SUBSEQUENT ACTION

1. The Principal Contractor or Client’s Representative will immediately arrange for sampling and testing of suspect materials.
2. Suspect areas will be quarantined immediately using physical barriers and signs.
3. Suspect areas will remain quarantined until declared asbestos free.
4. Any confirmed contamination will be treated under the requirements of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012.

# ASBESTOS CEMENT SHEETING

1. Asbestos cement sheeting is the ONLY type of asbestos containing material (ACM) that you can remove. All others will require a licensed contractor.
2. You must have in place a suitable risk assessment and method statement detailing the below plan and method. The RAMS document must eb read and signed by all those undertaking the work and strictly adhered to. If any of the plan needs to change due to unforeseen risks then the work must STOP, the plan and method be reassessed, amended to ensure additional controls are in place.

## Preparing the work area

1. Ensure safe access – you may need a mobile access platform.
2. Restrict access – minimise the number of people present.
3. Close doors.
4. Use tape and notices to warn others. Ensure adequate lighting.

## Equipment

1. 500- and 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape.
2. Warning tape and notices.
3. Bolt cutter.
4. Webbing straps and rope.
5. Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent.
6. Bucket of water and rags.
7. Asbestos waste bag.
8. Clear polythene bag.
9. Lockable skip for larger quantities of waste.
10. Asbestos warning stickers

## Procedure

1. Check with the premises owner that only AC is present.
2. Protect nearby surfaces from contamination.
3. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.

## Overlaying AC sheets

1. Can you overlay sheets with non-asbestos material instead of removing the AC? If so, attach the material to existing purlins.
2. Avoid drilling through the AC.

## Removal

1. Avoid or minimise breaking the AC.
2. If fasteners hold the sheets in place, dampen and remove them and place them in the asbestos waste bag.
3. If the sheets are bolted in place, dampen and cut the bolts while avoiding contact with the AC.
4. Remove the bolts or fixings carefully and place them in the asbestos waste bag.
5. Unbolt, or use cutters to release gutters, drain pipes, ridge caps etc.
6. Avoid contact with the AC. Lower large pieces to the ground.
7. Don’t drop them or use rubble chutes.
8. Stack sheets carefully.
9. Where there are several AC sheets and other large items, place them in a lockable skip.
10. Double-wrap large pieces in 1000-gauge polythene sheeting.
11. Seal with duct tape.
12. Attach asbestos warning stickers.
13. Place small pieces in the asbestos waste bag.

## Cleaning and disposal

1. Clean the equipment and the area with damp rags.
2. Check for debris in fasteners or bolt holes.
3. Clean with damp rags.
4. Put debris, used rags, polythene sheeting and other waste in the asbestos waste bag and tape it closed. Ensure the bags/ sheets are clearly marked, wrapped up and sealed.
5. Dispose of contaminated webbing and rope as ‘asbestos waste’ and ensure it is double wrapped in polythene or similar and clearly marked.
6. Put the asbestos waste bag in a clear polythene bag and tape it closed. It must be clearly marked.

# ACCIDENTAL EXPOSURE TO ASBESTOS

## Emergency procedure

1. Warn anybody who may be affected.
2. Exclude from the area anyone not needed to deal with the release.
3. Identify the cause of the uncontrolled release.
4. Regain adequate control as soon as possible.
5. Make sure anyone in the work area affected who is not wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), including respiratory protective equipment (RPE), leaves the affected area immediately.
6. Minimise the spread of asbestos by ensuring they are suitably decontaminated.
7. Decontaminate anyone who is contaminated with dust and debris.
8. Ensure rags, clothing or PPE is decontaminated or disposed of as contaminated waste.
9. Consider lone and/or remote workers to ensure they can alert someone if necessary.

## Evacuation and Room Closure

1. The room where the incident occurred must be evacuated if:

* Any friable (easily crumbled) asbestos material is damaged
* Any insulating board or asbestos cement product is damaged to the extent that visible debris is present.
* There is any doubt about the nature of dust or debris within the area.

1. Where these circumstances exist all windows and doors must be closed and any ventilation equipment or gas appliances turned off. The area should be sealed off and locked if possible to prevent access.
2. If it is possible that contamination has spread to adjacent areas these should also be evacuated and sealed.
3. Signs warning of the hazard must be posted and entry prohibited to all except authorised staff who are wearing suitable personal protective equipment.
4. All work involving removal of asbestos and clearance of contaminated areas must be carried out by a contractor licensed for this work by the HSE.

## Contaminated Clothing

1. Staff or others who may have been exposed to the asbestos dust must not be allowed to take home clothing that might be contaminated with asbestos fibres. Clothing that is (or could possibly be) contaminated by asbestos must be removed and placed in a polythene bag which is then sealed.
2. It may be disposed of using a licensed contractor or sent to a laundry which is equipped to handle asbestos contaminated clothing. Prison laundries will not be in a position to deal with this.
3. Suitable alternative clothing must be made available.

## Contaminated Equipment

1. Any equipment or item that has been contaminated with asbestos must be thoroughly decontaminated by a licensed contractor if it is to be reused. If it is to be disposed it must be securely stored until disposed of by a licensed contractor.

## Clearing of Asbestos Debris

1. Asbestos materials should never be left loose or in a state where they can be trampled or otherwise spread.
2. Asbestos material or debris must only be removed by a licenced contractor.

## Reporting Incidents of Asbestos Exposure

1. Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 the inadvertent release of asbestos fibres to the atmosphere regardless of whether staff have been exposed or not must be reported to the HSE.
2. Accidental release of asbestos to the atmosphere, whether members of staff have been exposed or not, must be reported to the M2 Safety.

## Record Keeping

1. Records must be made of all possible exposures of staff to asbestos fibres. All such records must be maintained for 40 years and must contain at least the following information:

* surname, forenames, sex, date of birth, permanent address, postcode, National Insurance number;
* a record of any work with asbestos prior to this employment; and
* dates of medical examination.

1. A completed form should be retained in the employee’s personal file an a copy given to the employee.

## Support for Staff who may have been Exposed to Asbestos

1. Asbestos related lung damage can take years to develop and become visible on X-rays and there may be a delay of between 15 and 60 years between first exposure to asbestos and the first symptoms of disease.
2. X-rays cannot indicate whether or not asbestos fibres have been inhaled.
3. It will be almost impossible to ascertain the amount of asbestos that has been inhaled even if the type of asbestos is known. In many cases exposure will have been minimal, with little likelihood of any long-term ill-effects.
4. However, staff who have been exposed to asbestos will be understandably worried and anxious about their health.
5. Staff who have been exposed to asbestos must be referred to their GP or a chest clinic for advice.
6. Staff who have been exposed to asbestos must be offered a referral to an Occupational Health doctor designated by the company who will provide a counselling and advisory service and have competent trained staff who will provide advice and support for staff who may have been exposed to asbestos and are worried about the outcome.
7. Where specialist counselling outside the remit of the designated Occupational Health Doctor is required the company will be responsible for ensuring that funding is available.

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