

Asbestos Guidance

Q. I am removing asbestos cement sheets from my shed/garage/house what do I do?

A. Flat or corrugated asbestos widely cement sheeting was widely used to build garages and sheds and is found in many other properties. If your garage or shed is an old one (pre 1983) and if the roof and/or walls are made of a flat or corrugated grey sheet about 3-4mm thick (1/8th inch) then these sheets could well be asbestos cement, typically containing 10 to 15% asbestos. After 1983 these products stopped containing asbestos, although sheets from an older building may have been re-used.

Pay careful attention if your garage is attached to your house, as the garage may be lined with a potentially more dangerous material called Asbestos Insulation Board (AIB). AIB is thicker and softer than asbestos cement sheeting. It is also dustier and far more likely to crumble when being removed, releasing asbestos fibres into the air. AIB presents a far higher risk than asbestos cement products and should only be removed by an experienced contractor licensed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for asbestos removal. Other materials that should only be removed by a licensed contractor include asbestos lagging and asbestos spray coatings.

If you wish to remove asbestos cement sheeting from your own domestic property you can either:

- Employ a licensed asbestos removal contractor to do it for you; or
- Do it yourself.

A full list of asbestos licence holders can be found on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk (search for "asbestos" in the search facility to find it).

With certain precautions, there is no reason why a competent DIY'er cannot remove asbestos cement sheeting themselves. These precautions are:

- Plan the job. Many asbestos cement products are located at height so it's not just the risk from asbestos that you need to consider. Asbestos cement sheet roofs are fragile and should not be walked on.
- Prepare the work area – remove any unnecessary items that will get in the way and cover the floor and surfaces with disposable plastic sheeting to collect dust.
- Keep children and others not involved away from the area where possible.
- Wear protective clothing – preferably a disposable overall/boiler suit (with elasticated cuffs and ankles and a hood) and rubber or disposable gloves.
- Wear something like Wellington boots on your feet as these can be washed down at the end.
- You should also wear a face mask. This should be suitable for asbestos removal. The disposable ones are fine. A safety equipment supplier should be able to help.
- Always put on your mask **before** you pull the hood over your head. Only remove your mask **after** you have pulled down the hood and taken off your overalls.
- Personal hygiene is important. No one must smoke whilst doing the work. Hands and face must be thoroughly washed before eating, drinking or smoking and on finishing work a thorough wash is required.
- Gently dampen down the sheet/s to be removed with water to reduce the chance of asbestos fibres being released into the air. Waiting for a wet drizzly day would be ideal. Alternatively, use a garden hose (gently!), plant sprayer or watering can. Don't drench the work area, as this will make cleaning up more difficult. Ensure that water doesn't run off the sheeting and contaminates the floor or ground

underneath – asbestos fibres will be released when it dried out. On no account use a high-pressure water sprayer that will blast asbestos fibres across a large area.

- Remove the damp asbestos cement sheets carefully. Do not break the sheets up or crush them. Avoid damaging the sheets by cutting the fixings securing them to the frame rather than the sheets themselves. Breaking the sheets up increases the risk of asbestos fibres being released into the air. On no account use power tools such as saws to cut the sheets up into smaller pieces as this will release a lot of dust and asbestos fibres.
- When removing sheets from height, lower them gently to the ground rather than throwing them and breaking them up.
- Whilst still damp, place the removed sheets into heavy gauge plastic bags or wrap them securely with plastic sheeting. Seal the bags securely with ties or adhesive tape. This should then be repeated so each sheet is double wrapped. Make them as airtight as possible; otherwise fibres may be released into your car when you take them away for disposal.
- Visually inspect the area and clear up any debris, whilst still damp, by hand with damp cloths. Do not dry sweep with a broom. Never use a domestic vacuum cleaner, as the fibres will just pass straight through the filters, spreading asbestos fibres around the area.
- Industrial cleaners that are suitable for asbestos can be hired; but if you think you need to use one of these you should carefully consider whether an experienced licensed contractor should be carrying out the work instead.
- Whilst still wearing the protective clothing, pick up the plastic sheeting and dispose of this and any cloths used as asbestos waste.
- Carefully remove all protective clothing and discard as asbestos waste, i.e. in sealed plastic bags.
- Wash any clothing immediately after work has finished.
- Wash well afterwards, especially hands, hair and face, to remove any dust and asbestos fibres. Showers are preferable to baths, as fibres present on the face or in hair should be removed more thoroughly.
- Take the bagged/wrapped asbestos cement sheeting to a suitable Kent Country Council disposal site. Tell a member of staff that you have some asbestos cement sheeting from a domestic property and they will direct you to the correct bin. **Asbestos waste must not be placed with other types of waste.**
- Disposal of asbestos cement sheets in Kent is currently free for domestic householders. The nearest sites that will accept asbestos sheets to Tunbridge Wells are:

North Farm Waste Recycling Centre	Sevenoaks Waste Recycling Centre	Maidstone Household Recycling Centre
Longfield Road North Farm Industrial Estate Tunbridge Wells	Main Road, Dunbrik, Sundridge TN14 6EP	Burial Ground Lane, Tovil, Maidstone ME15 6RJ
03000 417 373	Telephone: 03000 41 73 73	Telephone: 03000 41 73 73
http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/bins-and-recycling/north-farm-waste-recycling-centre	https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20000/rubbish_and_recycling	http://www.kent.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/rubbish-and-recycling/find-your-nearest-tip

It is advisable to contact the nearest site **before** you start the work to check opening times and to ensure that they have enough space to take your asbestos sheets. Do not use a trailer or commercial vehicle; staff will refuse to take asbestos waste that they think has been removed by a commercial contractor.

Further details on the disposal of asbestos waste are available on the Kent County Council website at www.kent.gov.uk.

For further details on asbestos removal please contact the Food and Commercial Team on 01892 526121.