

Cleaning weathered asbestos containing roofing and cladding

This information sheet sets out safe work techniques for cleaning asbestos-containing roofing and cladding. This includes asbestos cement roofs and cladding and decramastic tile roofs. This work is often done to improve the materials appearance or to prepare it for surface coating.

Read this information sheet alongside [Working with or near asbestos – good practice guidelines](#) which sets out seven steps for doing asbestos-related work.

Before you start

Tools and equipment you will need

Make sure you have all the standard equipment you need for doing asbestos-related work. See [Sections 5.3 and 7.0 of Working with or near asbestos – good practice guidelines](#) for details.

You will need the following equipment:

- approved biocide (pesticide/fungicide/herbicide)
- low-pressure sprayer with water and added detergent
- heavy-duty plastic sheeting
- wet wipes or a bucket of water (with added detergent) and clean rags
- adhesive tape
- asbestos waste bags and labels.



Isolate the work area

Take steps to stop unauthorised people from entering the work area while the work is underway and until the area has been decontaminated at the end of the job:

- put barriers and signs up to keep people away from the work area
- close all access points – such as doors, windows or gates
- move items out of the way or cover and seal them with heavy-duty plastic sheeting, also use the sheeting on the ground/floor under and around the work area. This will save you having to decontaminate the items later
- set up your decontamination area.

See [Section 6.0 of Working with or near asbestos – good practice guidelines](#) for more detailed instructions.

If you will be drilling all the way through the AC there may be dust produced at the exit point on the other side. If the exit point is accessible that area must but be blocked off as well. For example, if drilling into a roof from the outside, block off the area underneath in the roof cavity.

Put on your PPE and RPE

Make sure you are wearing the right PPE and RPE. See [Section 7.0 in Working with or near asbestos – good practice guidelines](#) for more detailed instructions.

To see more on RPE and PPE, watch these videos [How to wear a disposable respirator safely](#) and [How to wear a reusable respirator safely](#)

Doing the job

Safe work steps

Step 1

Seal gaps into the building with polythene sheeting, secured with adhesive tape. If necessary, remove debris first.

Step 2

Prepare the biocide according to the instructions on the label. Apply it using a low-pressure sprayer. Never use high-pressure spraying or blasting when working with asbestos.

Step 3

Allow time for the biocide to work – check the product label.

Step 4

Keep the surface wet and remove growths. Dead plant roots are hard to remove – leave these in place. Chop off plant tops but keep roots in place as pulling roots can dislodge asbestos.

Step 5

Scoop gutter/downpipe debris into an asbestos waste disposal bag.



FIGURE 1: Wet the debris again if you find dry material but avoid creating a slurry

Once you have finished

Clean up and waste disposal

Put all disposable materials used during the work (such as polythene sheeting) in the asbestos waste bag then double bag it and tape it closed with a gooseneck tie. Clearly label it as containing asbestos.

- [Video: Disposing of asbestos waste and PPE safely](#)
- See [Section 10 of Working with or near asbestos – good practice guidelines](#) for more detailed instructions.

Thoroughly decontaminate the work area and all reusable tools and equipment used during the work.

- [Video: How to decontaminate tools safely](#)
- See [Section 9 of Working with or near asbestos – good practice guidelines](#) for more detailed instructions.

Personal decontamination

You must thoroughly decontaminate yourself.

- [Video: Taking off your respirator and PPE safely](#)
- See [Section 9 of Working with or near asbestos – good practice guidelines](#) for more detailed written instructions.

Final checks

- Visually inspect the area to make sure it is clean.

Note: These safe work techniques reflect recommended good practice. You can carry out this work using different practices, but you need to achieve or exceed the same levels of safety provided by these practices.