

Inspecting asbestos composite friction materials

This information sheet sets out safe work techniques for inspecting asbestos friction materials such as older vehicle clutch assemblies.

These practices are only required in vehicle parts known to contain asbestos such as in classic/vintage cars. This information does not cover the removal of asbestos composite friction materials.

Read this information sheet alongside [Working with or near asbestos: Guidance for tradespeople](#) 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: Guidance for tradespeople](#) for details.

You will need the following equipment:

- hand drill or low-speed power drill with dust control hood, if possible
- H-class (high hazard) vacuum cleaner. Do not use domestic or general-purpose vacuum cleaners, even those with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters
- a catch tray or similar container
- tissues/towels
- low-pressure spray bottle with water and added detergent
- wet wipes or a bucket of water (with added detergent) and clean rags
- adhesive tape
- asbestos waste bags and labels.



See [Section 12 of Asbestos removal – good practice guidelines](#) for more information about tools and equipment, including prohibited tools.

See [Section 17 of Asbestos removal – good practice guidelines](#) for detailed PPE and RPE requirements.

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 polythene sheeting. 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.

Put on your PPE and RPE

Make sure you are wearing the right PPE and RPE. See [Section 7.0 of 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

There are two methods available – use the wet method if practicable, but if this is not possible, use the dry method.

WET METHOD

Step 1

Use the misting spray bottle to dampen down any visible dust.

Step 2

Use a damp rag/wet wipe to wipe down the wheel or automobile part before removing it. Keep disturbed asbestos damp as you go by gently misting with soapy water.

Step 3

Where possible use hand tools instead of power tools to reduce generating airborne asbestos fibres.

Step 4

Partially open the housing and gently mist the inside with water with the misting spray bottle. Control any dust, debris or water spillage (for example, capture run-off in a tissue or towel-lined container) and dispose of it as asbestos waste.

Step 5

Open the housing and clean all asbestos parts using a damp rag/wet wipe, capturing all run-off water in an asbestos waste container.

DRY METHOD

Step 1

Place a tray under the components to catch dust or debris from the housing or components during the inspection and dispose of any material such as asbestos waste after gently misting with the soapy spray bottle.

Step 2

Use the H-class vacuum cleaner to remove asbestos dust or debris from brakes and rims or other materials before carrying out the inspection. Continue vacuuming while conducting the inspection.

Step 3

As you open or remove covers or cowling, vacuum thoroughly. Never use compressed air when working with asbestos products.

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.