

# Removing asbestos-containing floor tiles and mastic (no paper backing)

This information sheet sets out safe work practices for removing asbestos-containing floor tiles and mastic when there is no asbestos-containing paper backing present.



Asbestos paper backing is friable and must be removed by a Class-A removalist.

If the amount of asbestos flooring to be removed is more than 10m<sup>2</sup>, the removal must be done by a licensed removalist.

Read this information sheet alongside the [Asbestos removal – good practice guidelines](#). Make sure you are familiar with the general requirements for asbestos removal as explained in these guidelines before doing any asbestos removal.

## Before you start

### Tools and equipment you will need

You will need the following equipment:

- warning tape and notices
- heavy-duty polythene sheeting
- strong adhesive tape
- H-Class vacuum cleaner
- sharp knife
- hammer
- scraper
- shovel
- solvent, infrared lamp, dry ice (optional)



- low-pressure sprayer containing water mixed with detergent (1 part detergent to 8 parts water)
- bucket of water and rags
- clear, heavy-duty polythene bag
- asbestos waste bag, or sealable skip or hazardous waste rated transportation bag large enough to hold the removed material.
- PPE and RPE.

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

See [Section 17 of the 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 removal 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
- lay down heavy-duty polythene sheeting on the ground around and under the work area
- set up your decontamination area
- for removing non-friable asbestos less than 10m<sup>2</sup> an enclosure is not normally required. See [Section 9.3 of the Asbestos removal - good practice guidelines](#)
- see [Section 8.0 of the Asbestos removal - good practice guidelines](#) for more detailed written instructions.

## Put on your PPE and RPE

Make sure you are wearing the right PPE and RPE.

- For PPE and RPE requirements see [Section 17 of the Asbestos removal - good practice guidelines](#)
- [Video: How to wear a disposable respirator safely](#)
- [Video: How to wear a reusable respirator safely](#)

## Doing the job

### Safe removal procedures

#### Step 1

Place the scraper in the joint between the tiles. Lift the tile gently, try to avoid breaking the tile.

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#### Step 2

For firmly-fixed tiles, tap the scraper with the hammer. For a large tiled area, lift tiles using a shovel. Spray water under the tiles as they are lifted, to suppress dust. See Figure 1.

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#### Step 3

Gently scrape up adhering mastic. You can soften mastic with solvent, by warming with an infra-red lamp, or embrittle it with dry ice. Make sure you have good ventilation if you are using solvent or dry ice. Never sand the floor.

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#### Step 4

Place debris and smaller pieces in the asbestos waste bag.

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#### Step 5

Double wrap and seal larger pieces and place in a sealable skip or hazardous waste rated transportation bag.



**FIGURE 1:** Spray water under the tiles as they are lifted

## Once you have finished

### Clean up and waste disposal

Put all disposable materials used during the removal (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 14 of the Asbestos removal – good practice guidelines](#) for detailed written instructions.

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

- [Video: How to decontaminate tools safely](#)
- See [Section 16 of the Asbestos removal – good practice guidelines](#) for detailed written instructions.

## Personal decontamination

You must thoroughly decontaminate yourself.

- [Video: Taking off your respirator and PPE safely](#)
- See [Section 15 of the Asbestos removal – good practice guidelines](#) for more detailed written instructions.

## Final checks

- Visually inspect the area to make sure it is clean.
- Clearance air monitoring is not normally required for this task.