

**em6**

asbestos  
essentials

# Personal protective equipment (including RPE)

## Equipment and method sheet

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### Non-licensed tasks

This information will help employers and the self-employed to comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

It is also useful for trade union and employee safety representatives.

Only carry out work if you are properly trained and have the right equipment.

#### Remember:

- Asbestos fibres can cause fatal lung disease and lung cancer.
- Check what you're working on before you start.
- Read the safety checklist and sheet a0.
- You must be trained to work safely with asbestos materials.

### Caution

Never use laced boots; these are very difficult to clean properly.

Never take used overalls home.

Never leave the respirator lying around where it can collect dust.

Never dangle the respirator around your neck.

Make sure the correct filter is fitted.

### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes what personal protective equipment (PPE) you need.

It also describes respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

**PPE and RPE are your last lines of defence against asbestos fibres. Follow the methods in the task guidance sheets to avoid fibres being released into the air.**

### Overalls

- Disposable overalls – Type 5 (BS EN ISO 13982-1+A1) are suitable.
- You may need waterproof overalls for outdoor work.
- Wear one size too big to help to prevent ripping at the seams.
- If the cuffs are loose, seal them with tape.
- Avoid wearing a long-sleeved shirt – these are difficult to cover properly.
- Wear the overall legs over footwear. Tucking them in lets dust into footwear.
- Wear the hood over RPE straps.
- Dispose of used overalls as asbestos waste.

### Gloves

- If you wear protective gloves, use single-use disposable gloves. If you must use latex gloves, use only 'low-protein powder-free' gloves.
- Dispose of used gloves as asbestos waste.

### Footwear

- Boots are preferable to disposable overshoes which can cause a slipping risk.
- Choose boots without laces as these are easier to clean.



A 'dust mask' doubled up for more protection is useless. You need a respirator



Disposable RPE worn correctly



Disposable RPE worn correctly



Disposable RPE worn incorrectly



For some tasks, non-disposable RPE is needed

## Respiratory protective equipment

- Use suitable RPE with a UK-assigned protection factor (APF) of 20 or more.
- Suitable types of RPE:
  - disposable respirator to standards EN 149 (type FFP3) or EN 1827 (type FMP3);
  - half-mask respirator (to standard EN 140) with P3 filter;
  - semi-disposable respirator (to EN 405) with P3 filter.
- This equipment should be suitable for most short-duration non-licensed work. Workers should select a make and size that fits them.
- This equipment is not suitable for people with beards or stubble – hooded respirators are required for these situations.
- The equipment is also unsuitable for long periods of continuous use; you need power-assisted equipment for such situations.

## Planning and preparation

- Plan for and practise emergency procedures such as failure or damage to RPE.
- Workers need to be fit tested to make sure that the RPE fits them properly.
- Arrange fit testing and training on use and inspection of RPE before the work starts. Ask the supplier for help or contact [fit2fit.org](http://fit2fit.org) for details of accredited fit test providers. See More help on sheet a0.
- Workers must be medically fit to wear RPE – seek medical advice if you are not sure.

## Training

- Make sure that RPE users know:
  - how to check their equipment is working properly before they put it on;
  - how to check that it fits;
  - how to identify and replace worn or defective parts;
  - about the limitations of the RPE they are using.
- Instruct users to throw away disposable RPE/PPE as asbestos waste after one use.
- Tell workers to stop work and leave the area if they think their RPE is not working properly.

## Using RPE

- All types of RPE restrict what the wearer can do. It is uncomfortable to wear for long periods, but it is important that you protect yourself.
- RPE has to be worn all the time and until the worker is away from the contaminated air.

- Put on and wear the respirator in accordance with your training and the manufacturer's instructions.
- Carry out a fit check in accordance with your training and the manufacturer's instructions.
- If the worker wears spectacles, they should ensure they do not create a gap between the mask and face.
- Put the overall hood over the straps.
- At the end of the shift, take off RPE last and, if it is disposable, put it in the asbestos waste.
- For non-disposable RPE, clean after use and store in a safe place away from contamination.
- With half-mask respirators, change filters regularly – your supplier may be able to advise you how often. Dispose of used filters as asbestos waste.

### **Maintenance of non-disposable equipment**

- Keep RPE clean and in good working order – follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Inspect and check RPE for damage every time. Carry out thorough checks monthly (or every three months if used infrequently). Inspect all parts including valves and seals. Replace the respirator as appropriate.

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