

ASBESTOS CEMENT SHEDS & GARAGES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I think my garage roof is made of asbestos, how can I be sure?

If the roof is a grey corrugated material, then it is most likely to be asbestos cement. Other materials that may have been used are corrugated iron, or reinforced plastic, although these are both much less common and easy to distinguish from asbestos.

Ok, I'm sure that my roof contains asbestos, should I remove it?

Not if it is good condition. Asbestos cement usually lasts for fifty or sixty years before it starts to leak and break up.

But, I thought that all asbestos was dangerous

That's right, but it is the fibres that are dangerous when they are breathed in. In a hard material like this, fibres are not given off if it is left alone. It is only if you disturb it and create fine dust that it becomes dangerous. That means no power tools (saw, sander, drill etc) and no wire brushes.

Mine is in a bad condition, do I need to employ a specialist?

Definitely not. Any general builder can do the work, although some may prefer not to. You can carry out the work yourself if you are used to D.I.Y., but due to the size and weight of the sheets, you may need someone to assist you. It is not necessary to employ a Licensed Contractor

Can I paint it to stop it leaking?

In general, painting asbestos is not recommended. Normally when asbestos leaks it is at the end of its useful life.

I want to remove it myself. How do I start?

Follow the guidance below. If at any time, you are not sure what to do then stop, and SEEK ADVICE BY TELEPHONING 01706 864112

PREPARATION

- Be sure that the panels are made of asbestos cement. Other boards cannot stand up to the weather, so if it is exposed to the wind and rain then it is asbestos cement. If the shed/garage is

lined internally with another type of board, and you are unsure about what it is – SEEK ADVICE ON THE NUMBER ABOVE.

- Know how you are going to dispose of it. You can take it to one of the Household Waste Recycling Sites at Chichester Street Rochdale, tel 01706 643871. Spring Vale Middleton tel. 0161 653 5271 or at Peel Lane Heywood tel. 01706 364956. At each of these sites there is a skip for the disposal of asbestos cement.
- Have plastic sheeting available to wrap the sheets as soon as you take them down (available from most large D.I.Y. stores and sold as polythene or damp-proof membrane, sold by the metre). This will avoid handling a second time. You may also need one or two strong plastic bags (such as rubble bags) for small pieces and silt/debris. You should also have plenty of strong adhesive tape.
- Have a hosepipe or small garden or plant spray available to keep the asbestos material wet.
- Have old clothes (which you can throw away) or a disposable paper overall available. You should also wear a fibre mask over your nose and mouth (you can get these from any good D.I.Y. store)
- Have the right tools – a large screwdriver, adjustable spanner, a hacksaw and a claw hammer or pinch bar to remove nails and a small set of step ladders. You may not need any of these, it depends on how the panels are fixed, but you are unlikely to need anything else.

STARTING THE WORK. DOING IT YOURSELF. - SAFETY FIRST!

- Keep everyone else away from the work. You don't want children around when you are knocking down a garage or shed.

- Isolate & disconnect any electrical supply to the building. It is recommended that you use an electrician or a competent person to ensure that the electrics have been properly disconnected and made safe.
- Do not go onto the roof under any circumstances. Asbestos cement is brittle and you may fall through. It also becomes very slippery when wet –Most of the work can be done from the inside.
- NEVER eat, drink, or smoke when you are handling asbestos products.
- Use a hose to get the asbestos-cement really wet – both inside and outside. Even better, is to do the work just after a period of heavy rain
- You must be careful with any silt in the bottom of gutters. Remember this has come from the asbestos-cement roof and will probably contain a high percentage of free asbestos fibres. Using the hose or spray, soak it well, and then scrape it into a strong plastic bag. Seal it and place it into a second strong plastic bag. Seal that bag and dispose of it with the asbestos-cement sheets and guttering.
- You can then unbolt or unscrew the asbestos-cement sheets. If the fixing internally uses bent bolts on metal angle joists, use a hacksaw to cut the bolts. It may be possible to unscrew bolts or screws with a screwdriver or spanner but they will often be rusted into place. If you cannot unscrew them, or nails have been used, then push the asbestos panel up through the head of the screw. This results in a small amount of damage around the head, but just damp this down with the spray, and pick off the remnants, placing them in a bag.
- Remove the sheets whole and wrap them straight away in the polythene sheeting. Remember that asbestos cement is heavy, and you are going to have to lift it later. Wrap only one or two sheets at a time unless they are very small. Avoid breaking the material unless it is absolutely necessary.
- If breakage occurs, any small pieces must be damped down, picked up and placed in a heavy-duty polythene bag for later collection/disposal.
- Keep the area clear of pieces of broken asbestos-cement. Under no circumstances must pieces be crushed underfoot. Wash down the area when you have finished.
- Wash yourself thoroughly on completion of the job or before eating or drinking.

Removal of asbestos-cement from sheds or garages presents little risk to health from the release of asbestos fibres provided the above instructions are followed. If any advice or assistance is needed. Please contact the Environmental Health, Health and Safety team on 01706 864112.

DISPOSAL

Dependent on where you live there are skips available at Household Waste Recycling Sites at Chichester Street, Rochdale, Peel Lane, Heywood, Spring Vale, Middleton. Contact details have been provided earlier.

It is recommended that you use a trailer for disposal rather than a car boot, as the trailer can be washed out afterwards.

**** The Scientific Bit****

Asbestos cement contains about 10-15% Chrysotile (white asbestos). There are at least four different types of asbestos commonly found, and white asbestos is sometimes regarded as less dangerous than others. This is mainly because the fibres are long, curly and soft. Brown and blue asbestos fibres, on the other hand, are straight and needle-like. Everyone now agrees that all asbestos is dangerous, what is important is that in asbestos cement, the two constituents are bound together so strongly that fibres are not normally released.

On completion wash all equipment with water to remove debris.