

Guidance from the Danish Working Environment Authority

Cleaning and inspection before completion of asbestos work

According to the Asbestos Executive Order, cleaning must be carried out continuously during asbestos work, and a thorough final cleaning must be carried out before the asbestos work is completed.

Cleaning should be carried out to avoid unnecessary exposure to asbestos dust during and after work.

The final cleaning is done first by vacuuming and then wet cleaning all surfaces depending on the nature of the materials and thorough ventilation for 24 hours.

This is followed by a second thorough cleaning and another thorough ventilation of the same duration. For surfaces that are difficult to clean, additional cleaning may be necessary.

A vacuum cleaner used for cleaning must be suitable for the purpose. According to the DS/EN standard for vacuum cleaners, a dust class H vacuum cleaner will be suitable.

The people doing the final cleaning must use the same personal protective equipment that will be used during demolition. After cleaning and initial ventilation, personal protective equipment is usually not necessary.

Checking the cleaning

When the asbestos work is completed, the area must be free of asbestos dust. This applies to both indoor and outdoor work. For example, when removing cement slate with asbestos on roofs, it is necessary to do a thorough final cleaning of wall crowns, skeleton and attic spaces, rafters, battens, etc.

If the cleaning and ventilation has been carried out thoroughly as described above, a visual inspection will usually be sufficient, checking that there is no dust on horizontal surfaces, edges, etc.

If there is dust, lumps of material or similar, cleaning and ventilation must be repeated.

When necessary to determine whether asbestos dust is present after final cleaning, gel tape samples or similar must be taken at relevant locations for asbestos analysis.

Air measurements taken after any dust has been raised can also be useful when checking the cleaning for asbestos dust.

Thorough cleaning – and still some asbestos fibres

During demolition, there may be situations where, even after thorough final cleaning, as described above, individual asbestos fibres may still be present, typically on specific surfaces in the work area. Gel tape tests will be able to demonstrate this.

As an example this could be the demolition of an asbestos-containing roof, where after repeated thorough cleaning of the roof structure, there may still be individual asbestos fibres in cracks and crevices or on rough surfaces that cannot reasonably be removed because it will require parts of the structure to be replaced.

If that situation arises, the client must ensure that the health and safety coordinator coordinates the organisation of the cooperation between the employers who succeed each other on the construction site.

This means that employers must work together to ensure that subsequent work and traffic in the area can take place without exposure to asbestos dust. This can be, for example, by taking measures that bind the asbestos fibers in cracks and crevices or on rough surfaces from being whirled up.

Work must always be carried out in compliance with the limit value for asbestos in the working environment.