

HOMEOWNER SAFE-WORK GUIDE

How to Safely Perform Your Own Asbestos Abatement in Washington State

READ THIS FIRST. This guide is provided as a courtesy with your Absolute Asbestos Services supply package. It summarizes basic safety practices, but it does not make you a trained asbestos worker, and it does not replace the judgment of a licensed abatement contractor. Asbestos fibers cause lung cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis. There is no safe level of exposure. You are performing this work at your own risk.

1. The Law — What You Can and Cannot Do

Under **WAC 296-65-007**, a Washington homeowner may perform asbestos abatement on their own **owner-occupied, single-family residence** without holding a contractor license. This exemption does NOT apply if:

- The property is a rental, duplex, triplex, or any multi-family building.
- You hired someone else to do the work for you (that person needs a license).
- The property is commercial or public.

Even as an exempt homeowner, you must still **dispose of asbestos waste at a permitted facility** and may need to file **written notification with NWCAA** (Northwest Clean Air Agency) before starting work. When in doubt, call us and we will tell you straight.

LEGAL REALITY. If you illegally dump asbestos waste, you can be fined tens of thousands of dollars and held liable for cleanup costs. The landfill fee is always cheaper than the fine.

2. Before You Start Work

Plan the job

- Identify exactly what material you are removing (popcorn ceiling, vinyl floor tile, pipe wrap, siding).
- Measure the area. If it is larger than you expected, call us for a quote before you commit.
- Notify everyone in the household. Children, pets, and anyone with respiratory conditions should be OUT of the house during work and for 24 hours after cleanup.
- Turn off HVAC. Seal and tape over every supply and return register in the work area with 6-mil poly.
- Plan your disposal. Have the bags and a staging area outside ready BEFORE you start.

Respirator fit check

A respirator only works if it seals on your face. Before you start work:

1. Put the respirator on with both straps tightened evenly. The mask should be centered on your nose and chin.

2. Cover the filters with your palms and inhale gently. The mask should pull in against your face and hold. If you feel air leaking anywhere, adjust and try again.
3. Cover the exhale valve and exhale gently. The mask should puff outward slightly. If air leaks, adjust.
4. Facial hair breaks the seal. If you have a beard, shave the seal area or the respirator will not protect you.

IMPORTANT. A respirator that does not seal properly gives you ZERO protection. If you cannot get a good fit, do not proceed with the work. A respirator that leaks is worse than useless — it gives you false confidence while fibers reach your lungs.



SCAN WITH PHONE CAMERA

FIT-TEST TRAINING VIDEO

Before you start work, watch 3M's official respirator fit-test training video. Scan the QR code at left with your phone camera, or visit:
youtube.com/watch?v=lelOaAzK2qE

DISCLAIMER AND LIMITATION OF LIABILITY. The training video linked above is produced, hosted, and controlled by 3M Company. It is not produced, endorsed, reviewed, or maintained by Absolute Asbestos Services LLC, and its content, availability, and accuracy may change at any time without notice. **Watching this video is not a substitute for a formal OSHA-compliant fit test under 29 CFR 1910.134.** Homeowner abatement is considered voluntary use outside OSHA's mandatory scope, but the physiological risk from a poorly-fitting respirator is identical whether you are in a commercial workplace or your own home.

By using this respirator, you acknowledge and agree that: (a) you have read and understand the manufacturer's user instructions included with the respirator packaging; (b) you are solely responsible for achieving and verifying a proper seal before and during use; (c) you assume all risk of injury, illness, or death arising from improper fit, improper use, facial hair, facial structure, equipment defect, or any other cause; and **(d) Absolute Asbestos Services LLC makes no warranty, express or implied, regarding the suitability of this respirator for your particular face, task, or exposure conditions, and shall not be liable for any damages whatsoever arising from your use or misuse of this equipment.**

3. Putting On PPE — Correct Order

Get dressed **outside the work area**, in this order:

1. **Nitrile gloves — inner pair.** Pull them up past your wrists.
2. **Tyvek coverall.** Step in feet-first, zip up to your neck, then pull up the hood. Do NOT put the hood on yet if you are wearing a respirator with straps — put the respirator on first, then the hood over it.
3. **Respirator.** Fit-check as described in Section 2. Once on, do not touch or adjust during work.
4. **Hood over respirator straps.**
5. **Safety glasses** (if using a half-face respirator — full-face includes eye protection).
6. **Tape cuffs.** Use duct tape to seal the coverall wrist cuffs over your gloves. Tape the ankle cuffs over your boots or shoe covers.

7. **Outer glove layer.** A second pair of nitrile gloves on top, taped to the Tyvek sleeve. When the outer layer gets contaminated, you can peel it off and keep working clean.

4. Removing the Material Safely

Golden rules

- **WET, WET, WET.** Use amended water (water with a few drops of dish soap) in a pump sprayer. Mist the material before AND during removal. Wet fibers do not go airborne.
- **NO POWER TOOLS.** No sanders, grinders, saws, or drills. Hand tools only — scrapers, utility knives, pry bars.
- **NO SWEEPING, NO DRY DUSTING.** This kicks fibers back into the air. Wipe with wet industrial wipes only.
- **NO SHOP VACS.** A regular shop vac blows fibers right through its filter into the air. Only a true HEPA vacuum is safe — and a homeowner almost never has one. Wet wipe everything instead.

Containment

- Cover floors with one layer of 6-mil poly. Tape the seams.
- Cover walls with another layer of 6-mil poly, taped to the floor sheeting.
- Seal doorways into the room. One entry only, through a flap of poly.
- Post an Asbestos Warning Sign at the entry so no one walks in unaware.

Removal technique

1. Mist the material. Wait 30 seconds. Mist again.
2. Work in small sections. Scrape or pull gently — never yank or break chunks.
3. As material comes off, bag it immediately. Do not let debris pile up.
4. Mist the debris inside the bag before you seal it. Wet debris stays put.

5. Bagging, Sealing, and Labeling

Every bag gets the same treatment. No shortcuts.

1. Fill bag no more than 2/3 full. A full bag is too heavy and can split.
2. **Mist the contents** one more time before closing.
3. **Squeeze the air out** from the top of the bag.
4. **Goose-neck the bag** — twist the top tightly like a ponytail, then fold the twisted neck over on itself.
5. **Tape it closed** with duct tape wrapped around the folded neck.
6. **Double-bag** — place the first bag inside a second asbestos bag and repeat steps 2–5.
7. **Stage outside** the work area in a location where kids and animals cannot reach.

GOOSE-NECK MATTERS. A flat-tied bag will fail. The goose-neck twist is the only closure method that keeps fibers contained when the bag is handled, tossed, or squeezed at the landfill. If your bag doesn't have a goose-neck, the landfill can refuse it — and you'll be the one driving it home.

6. Getting Out of the Suit — Decon Procedure

This is where most DIYers contaminate themselves and their house. Follow this order EVERY time you leave the work area:

1. Mist your suit down while still in the work area. Get it wet all over.

2. Wipe your outer gloves with an industrial wet wipe. Peel them off inside-out and bag them.
3. Remove duct tape from ankle and wrist cuffs and bag it.
4. Peel the Tyvek coverall off from the shoulders down, turning it inside-out as you go. Do NOT let the outside touch your skin or clothes. Bag it.
5. Wipe your boots/shoe covers with a wet wipe. Bag covers.
6. Wipe your inner gloves, then your forearms, neck, and any exposed skin with fresh wet wipes.
7. **Leave the respirator on** until you are out of the work area AND have wiped your face with a respirator wipe. Only then remove the respirator.
8. Shower immediately. Wash hair and beard thoroughly. Don't share towels.

DO NOT WASH TYVEK SUITS. Tyvek coveralls are single-use disposable. Washing them releases fibers into your washer and dryer. Bag them with the asbestos waste.

7. Red Flags — Stop and Call Us

If any of these happen during your project, stop work and call us. We will not lecture you. We will tell you honestly what your options are, including whether it's cheaper to hire us to finish.

- **You find more asbestos than expected** — e.g., you thought it was one ceiling and now you've exposed pipe wrap in the walls.
- **The material is crumbling, powdery, or "friable."** Friable asbestos (TSI pipe wrap, insulation, fireproofing) is much more dangerous than bonded materials and typically should NOT be a DIY job.
- **Your containment fails** — a sheet of poly tears open mid-job, debris spreads outside the work area, or someone walks in without PPE.
- **Your respirator fails** — strap breaks, cartridges get wet, or you can't get a seal anymore.
- **You feel dizzy, short of breath, or claustrophobic.** Get out. Get fresh air. Do not finish the day.
- **You're not sure if something contains asbestos.** We can send a sample to a NVLAP-accredited lab for ~\$35-50 and have results in a few days. A \$40 test is much cheaper than assuming and being wrong in either direction.

8. Disposing of the Waste

Your double-bagged, sealed, goose-necked waste has three legal destinations in Washington:

1. **Roosevelt Regional Landfill** (Republic Services, Klickitat County) — accepts ACM from generators statewide. ~400 miles round-trip from Bellingham.
2. **Columbia Ridge Landfill** (Waste Management, Oregon) — another permitted regional facility.
3. **Hire us to haul it.** See our supply menu for flat-rate pickup pricing. We handle the manifest and bring you back a signed disposal receipt for your records.

NEVER DO THIS. Do not put asbestos waste in your regular trash. Do not take it to your local transfer station — they will refuse it and may report you. Do not bury it, burn it, or "forget" it in a corner of the garage. All of these are federal and state violations, and the fines are serious.

We're Here If You Need Us

You got this guide because you bought supplies from us — which means you are taking your own safety seriously. That matters. We genuinely hope your project goes smoothly and your house comes out asbestos-free and safe.

But if at any point you want to hand the job off — whether it's tomorrow, mid-project, or at the cleanup stage — **call us.** No judgment, no pressure, and our walkthrough visits are free.

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