

# Personal Protective Equipment

## Why should I use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

There is a potential for asbestos fibers to be released when removing asbestos-containing material (ACM). In addition to using proper removal procedures, using personal protective equipment will significantly reduce your exposure to asbestos fibers.

## Respirators

Respirators are used to purify the air you are breathing. The most common respirator is a half-face, dual cartridge respirator. Respirators must be equipped with HEPA filtered cartridges (color coded purple) or an N-100, P-100 or R-100 NIOSH rating. These cartridges are specific for filtering out asbestos fibers. Paper dust masks available at hardware stores do not filter out asbestos fibers and should not be used. Half face respirators cover the nose and mouth and consist of a silicone or rubber face piece, elastic head harness and filter cartridges.

Respirators provide little protection if they do not fit properly. Facial hair, especially beards and goatees, will not allow the respirator to fit properly. Read the instructions thoroughly. If possible, request from the vendor a fit test to ensure a proper fit and instruction on performing a fit check of the respirator seal. A fit check is done each time the respirator is worn.

**Medical Warning:** Respirators cause the lungs to work harder in order to breathe air. Check with your doctor before buying a respirator to see if you are physically able to wear a respirator.

## Eyewear

Safety goggles or glasses protect your eyes from any falling or flying debris. Eyewear should be used when removing materials from overhead and when cleaning with wire brushes. Eyewear is also recommended during floor tile removal.

## Disposable Coveralls

Disposable coveralls are used to keep asbestos-containing debris off of your body. Several pairs of disposable coveralls with built-in feet should be available during the removal work and clean up. It is recommended that two suits are worn at the same time. Every time you leave the work area, once ACM has been removed, the exterior suit should be removed inside the work area and be disposed of in a designated asbestos waste bag. This will help to ensure all asbestos debris remains in the work area. Oversized coveralls make it easier to move around. Most coveralls do not breathe, so you may get hot and uncomfortable. An optional method is to use old clothes and dispose of them as waste at the end of the project.

## Rubber Boots

Rubber boots are used to protect your feet from any sharp objects encountered during your project. Boots will also protect disposable coverall feet so they do not wear through. Laceless, pull-on rubber boots without fasteners are recommended. Boots can be washed off at the end of the project and used again. Check the tread of the boot to ensure no debris is stuck in it.



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### Disposable Gloves

Gloves protect the hands from sharp objects and reduce the amount of asbestos contamination on your hands. Several pairs of durable, disposable rubber or cloth gloves should be purchased.

Gloves should be worn by each person in the work area. When work is completed, gloves should be disposed of in a designated asbestos waste bag.

### Decontamination

All equipment and tools should be washed prior to leaving the work area. Inspect all surfaces of your safety equipment to ensure no contamination is leaving the work area. In addition to equipment, all exposed skin should be washed off to eliminate any contamination. Any equipment that cannot be cleaned must be disposed of as asbestos contaminated waste.

Using personal protective equipment in conjunction with the appropriate work and decontamination practices can greatly reduce exposure when removing ACM.

### How do I get more information?

For more information about asbestos, contact the Asbestos Program at the Minnesota Department of Health. You can call us at (651) 201-4620, visit our website at [www.health.state.mn.us/asbestos](http://www.health.state.mn.us/asbestos) or write us at the address on the front of this handout.

This handout was developed as a summary of MDH regulations. It does not cover all situations or conditions and is not to be used as a substitute for the Minnesota Statutes and Rules. Additional federal, state and local regulations may apply.

If you require this document in another format such as large print, Braille, or cassette tape, contact 651-201-5000 or 1-800-657-3908. For deaf or hard of hearing TTY: 651-201-5797