

DECONTAMINATION

Decontamination is the act of physically removing contaminants. You must decontaminate every time you leave the work area. The decontamination area is usually the first component built on an asbestos job. The decon must be available before anyone enters the regulated area.

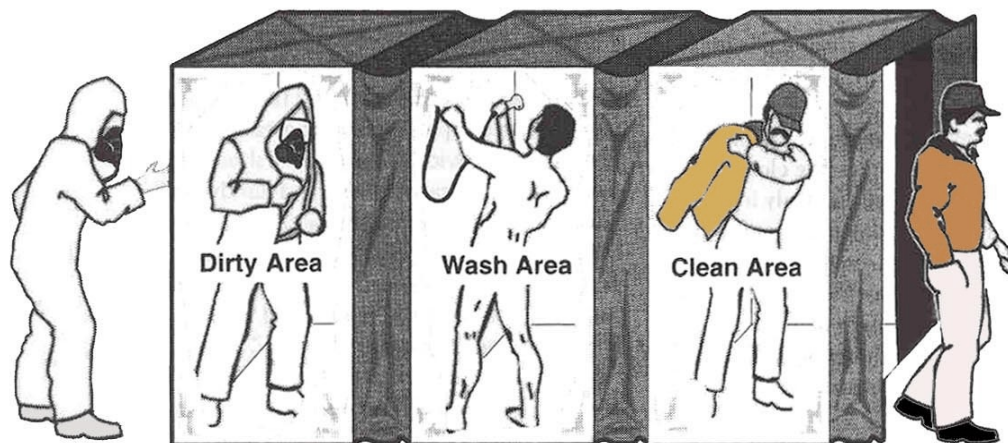
Paragraph (j) of the Asbestos standard tells how and where the decontamination area must be built. It also lists the procedures that must be followed when decontaminating.

The decon must have three rooms separated by self-closing doors: **the equipment or dirty room; the shower room; and the clean room.** Each room has a function. By following the procedures listed in **paragraph (j)**, you can safely enter and exit the work area.

Exiting the Work (Regulated) Area

Before Entering the Decon

When leaving the work area, but before entering the decon, HEPA vacuum your suit to remove any fibers that are clinging to your PPE. Start at the top and work down. It may be easier to work with a partner, with each person vacuuming the other's suit. After HEPA vacuuming your suit, enter the equipment room.



Worker enters decon from work area.

Worker exits decon after washing and changing.

Equipment Room

The equipment (“dirty”) room is where you remove your PPE with the exception of your respirator. All PPE must remain in this room unless it is decontaminated. There must be containers or waste bags for your suit.

Remove your suit by **rolling the dirty side of the suit away from you.** Turn the sleeves inside out when removing your arms from the suit. Place the suit in a disposal bag or other container and proceed to the shower while wearing your respirator.

Shower Room

Showers are required on all Class I jobs and on Class II and III jobs where the exposure exceeds the PEL or where no negative exposure assessment has been done, if feasible.

The shower must meet the requirements of **29CFR1910.141.** The water temperature must be adjustable. Soap and towels must be provided. If there is a mixed crew, separate showers must be provided for men and women.



When you enter the shower, wet your entire body to control any fibers that may be on you. Take a breath and wet your face in the shower. Turn away, remove your respirator, and wet your face in the shower again. This will lessen the chance that you will breathe in any fibers that may be on your face or on the respirator.

Either clean your respirator in the shower or place it in a tub for transfer to a facility that will clean it for you. Leave the shower and enter the clean room.



Class II or III Shower

Clean Room

The clean room is where you will dress in your street clothing before leaving the job or taking a break. It is also where you will leave your street clothing while you are working. Your employer must provide lockers or other means to secure your personal belongings while you are working.

Often the clean room will only be a small room where you will put on a clean suit to wear until you get to a larger locker room. This is allowed if it can be shown that it is not practical to have the locker room next to the work area. Examples would be a very large crew, work being performed on several floors of a building, or work being done outdoors.

Entering the Work Area

To enter the work area, enter the clean room, remove your street clothing, and put on your protective clothing and respirator.

Proceed through the shower to the equipment room. Don any other protective equipment such as a hard hat and enter the work area.

Emergency Situations

The only way in or out of the work area should be through the decon area. Emergency exits may be provided. They may not be used for routine entry or exit. They are to be used only in case of an emergency such as a fire.

If you exit the work area in an emergency situation, decon as soon as possible. Do not leave the area except in cases of extreme emergency or life threatening situations. Anywhere you go will need to be decontaminated.

Waste Loadout

Anything, including waste bags, must be decontaminated before leaving the containment. **A separate decon is built for waste loadout. It usually is made up of two rooms; a wash room where the waste containers are cleaned, and a storage area where the decontaminated containers are stored for removal from the site.**

This area is also used to decontaminate any equipment before it leaves

the containment.

Additional Sanitation Facilities

Toilet Facilities

The requirements for toilet facilities are listed in **29CFR1926.51(c)**. The ratio is one toilet for every 10 workers for a standard 40 hour week. There must be separate facilities for male and female employees.

Hand and Face Washing

There should always be a location where employees can wash their hands and face before eating and before and after using toilet facilities.

While working with asbestos is a dangerous occupation if not handled properly, many other chemicals that are commonly found on many worksites are just as hazardous. Proper sanitation before eating or using toilet facilities can mean the difference between leaving the workplace healthy or contaminating yourself and others.

Emergency Stations

In addition to the sanitation facilities mentioned above, there also may be a need for emergency stations. Eyewash stations should be provided if there is a danger of debris getting in the workers' eyes. Certain chemicals used in the removal process may require the use of emergency decontamination if the chemical gets on the workers' skin or in their eyes. Know where these areas are and how to properly use them if needed.

Key Facts

Decontamination is the removal of asbestos and other contamination from you before you leave the work area.

Decontamination protects you and your family, community, and coworkers.

If you do not decontaminate properly, you can carry asbestos and other contaminants with you when you leave the work area.

The decon must contain three rooms in this order: Equipment room; Shower; and Clean Room

Your respirator is the last piece of PPE removed. It is removed in the shower.

A shower must be provided if possible.

If there is no shower, wash your hands and face before leaving the job. Shower as soon as you get home

Only enter and exit the work area through the decontamination chamber, except in emergency situations.

Usually there is a separate decon area for waste.



NOTES

