

How to Remove Nonfriable Vinyl Asbestos Floor Tiles

A Guide for General Contractors to Meet DEQ Rules

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality regulates the removal, handling and disposal of asbestos-containing materials during renovation and demolition. Asbestos-containing material means any material containing more than one percent asbestos. Nonfriable asbestos material is asbestos-containing material that, when dry, cannot be crumbled, pulverized, or reduced to powder by hand pressure or by the forces expected to act on the material in the course of demolition, renovation, transportation or disposal. This document provides guidance for removing nonfriable vinyl asbestos floor tiles.

Disclaimer

Asbestos is a hazardous air pollutant that is known to cause cancer. There is no safe level of exposure. DEQ recommends hiring a [DEQ-licensed asbestos abatement contractor](#) to perform any asbestos removal projects, including nonfriable projects. If asbestos-containing material is not handled properly, it can become friable and release asbestos fibers into the air. Friable asbestos abatement projects must be performed by a DEQ-licensed asbestos abatement contractor, with a limited exception. Homeowners may perform an asbestos abatement project in the single unit private residence that they live in. They must handle and dispose of all asbestos-containing material in compliance with DEQ rules.

This guidance document provides information only and does not fully address, and must not be interpreted in any way as fully addressing, all products and/or [materials that may contain asbestos](#) or all procedures that may be used to safely remove asbestos-containing material. DEQ assumes no liability or responsibility for injuries, illnesses, health issues, or other related problems arising from any untrained person attempting to remove and dispose of asbestos without using a DEQ-licensed asbestos abatement contractor. If you undertake an asbestos removal project that is not performed by a DEQ-licensed asbestos abatement contractor, you assume all risks and liabilities that result from such a project.

Before you start

All applicable asbestos abatement rules found in [Oregon Administrative Rules 340, Division 248](#) must be followed. If you have questions, contact [asbestos program staff](#).

If the project is taking place in a school (K-12), you must also comply with the [Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act](#) regulations from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Contact the [EPA's regional office](#) at 800-424-4372 for current regulations and policy information.

Oregon Occupational Safety and Health also has rules for working safely with asbestos-containing materials. Please be certain that you comply with Oregon OSHA regulations if you are performing any asbestos removal or the renovation and maintenance of buildings and structures that contain asbestos. Contact [Oregon OSHA](#) at 503-378-3272 or toll-free at 800-922-2689 for current rule and policy information.

How to determine if a material contains asbestos

The only way to determine if a material contains asbestos is to take a sample and have it analyzed by a [laboratory](#). Alternatively, you may presume the material contains asbestos and treat it accordingly.



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Asbestos Program
700 NE Multnomah St.
Suite 600
Portland, OR 97232
Phone: 503-229-5696
800-452-4011
Fax: 503-229-6124
Contact: Hillarie Sales

www.oregon.gov/DEQ

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Asbestos Program Guidance

What are vinyl asbestos floor tiles?

Vinyl floor tiles, both 9" x 9" and 12" x 12" in size, can contain asbestos. The vinyl acts as a binder that holds the asbestos fibers within a solid matrix. This prevents asbestos fibers from being released easily, unless mishandled, damaged, or in badly worn condition. When kept intact, vinyl floor tiles are considered nonfriable. *Vinyl floor tiles should not be confused with sheet vinyl flooring that may have an asbestos backing. Sheet vinyl products are always considered friable.*

Removing nonfriable vinyl asbestos floor tiles

The removal of nonfriable asbestos-containing materials in good condition is exempt from some DEQ rules. You **do not** need to be a DEQ-licensed asbestos abatement contractor or a certified asbestos worker to perform nonfriable asbestos removal. If you remove vinyl asbestos floor tiles following this guide, they must remain intact.

Recommended Tools

- Water sprayer, garden type or spray bottle, or a garden hose with spray nozzle
- Three- to six-mil thick plastic sheeting
- Wide putty knives, paint scraper or flat floor scraper

Safety Tips

Even under the best conditions these projects are physically demanding and potentially dangerous. [Oregon OSHA provides guidance](#) for required safety equipment, such as Personal Protective Equipment or PPE, to perform asbestos removal. The following are some of the challenges to consider:

- Breathing through a respirator is difficult and places extra stress on the heart and lungs.
- Coveralls can be hot and hard to move around in.
- Work may involve ladders since some materials are located in high areas.
- Goggles and safety glasses reduce visibility and field of vision.
- Care must be taken around electric wires because water will be used to keep asbestos materials wet.
- The work area will be slick from wetting and may be a slipping or tripping hazard.

Notification

File a DEQ [nonfriable notification form](#), known as an ASN-6 form, for removal of nonfriable asbestos materials and pay the appropriate fee. The DEQ Business Office must receive the notification form at least five days before the start date of the nonfriable asbestos abatement project. In emergency situations, DEQ may grant a waiver of the five-day waiting period. For more information contact [asbestos program staff](#).

If the owner occupant of a single-family residence decides to perform the asbestos removal themselves in the home they live in, they do not need to file a notification or fee.

Regulated Area

The regulated area must be established by the person performing the asbestos abatement project. It includes the work area and any adjoining area where asbestos-containing waste material generated from the project site is securely packaged and stored. The regulated area must restrict access to authorized personnel only, and be demarcated with prominent warning signs along the perimeter that state, in bold, all-capital letters and separated as shown here:

**DANGER
ASBESTOS
MAY CAUSE CANCER**



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Asbestos Program Guidance

ASBESTOS CAUSES DAMAGE TO LUNGS

AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

Suggested procedures for removing nonfriable asbestos vinyl floor tiles

Vinyl asbestos floor tiles must be removed, handled and disposed of in a manner that keeps the material intact to be considered nonfriable. The method of removal cannot crumble, pulverize or reduce the material to dust. Sanding, sawing, grinding, chipping or the use of power tools is not allowed. DEQ recommends the following procedure for removing nonfriable asbestos vinyl floor tiles:

Step 1 – Use six-mil plastic sheeting to isolate doorways and cover floor registers, vents and other surfaces to prevent contamination from asbestos fibers.

Step 2 – DEQ requires the tiles be kept adequately wet during removal. Wetting minimizes asbestos fibers from being released. The tiles must remain adequately wet during removal, packaging, and until waste disposal occurs.

Step 3 - Use a wide putty knife or flat floor scraper and gently pry up the tiles. Keep the tiles in *whole pieces*, do not break material on purpose, do not step on material, and do not drop material. Once the material has been removed, do not break it to fit it into the required packaging.

Note: If the material cannot be removed without breaking, you must follow the requirements for abatement of friable asbestos-containing materials.

Waste Disposal

Vinyl asbestos tile waste must be kept adequately wet and packaged in leak-tight containers such as two, six-mil plastic bags with the asbestos hazard label, or within similar leak-tight packaging with the asbestos hazard label that states the following in bold, all-capital letters and separated as shown here:

DANGER

CONTAINS ASBESTOS FIBERS

AVOID CREATING DUST

CANCER AND LUNG DISEASE HAZARD

AVOID BREATHING AIRBORNE

ASBESTOS FIBERS

You may use burlap bags or a cardboard box as a liner inside the leak-tight container to minimize rips and tears.

Prior to transport, each of the asbestos-containing waste packages must have a label attached with the name of the generator (person doing the removal) and the address from where the asbestos-containing tile waste was removed. The waste packages must be labeled prior to removal from the regulated area.

The vinyl asbestos tile waste must be disposed of at a [landfill permitted to accept asbestos waste](#) and must be accompanied by a completed [waste shipment report](#), known as an ASN-4, at the time of disposal. Contact the landfill prior to delivering the asbestos waste. Landfills can be more stringent and may only accept asbestos waste by appointment.



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Asbestos Program Guidance

If the material becomes friable

If the vinyl asbestos tile becomes damaged or is badly weathered, it is considered friable and may release asbestos fibers. If the vinyl asbestos floor tiles become friable, stop work immediately, adequately wet the material and cover with six-mil plastic or equivalent and promptly contact a DEQ-licensed asbestos abatement contractor. ***Friable asbestos materials must be removed by a DEQ-licensed asbestos contractor using certified workers.***

A [DEQ friable notification form](#), known as an ASN-1 form, for the abatement of friable asbestos and the appropriate fee must be filed with DEQ. The DEQ Business Office must receive notification at least 10 days before the start date of the asbestos abatement project. In emergency situations, DEQ may grant a waiver of the 10-day waiting period. For more information [contact asbestos program staff](#).

Additional information

Visit the DEQ Asbestos Program website here: <https://go.usa.gov/xdG4K>

Find all DEQ's asbestos requirements in [Oregon Administrative Rules 340, Division 248](#). People handling asbestos must also follow other state and local government requirements, including requirements of [Oregon OSHA](#).

If you have questions about the rules, contact the regional asbestos program office listed below.

If asbestos-containing material is disturbed or mishandled, it may expose the public to asbestos fibers. Violations of asbestos rules and statutes may result in civil penalties.

Asbestos Program Contacts

Office	Address	Phone	Counties
Portland	700 NE Multnomah St. Suite 600 Portland, OR 97232	503-229-5982 or 800-452-4011	Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Multnomah, Tillamook, Washington
Salem	4026 Fairview Industrial Dr. Salem, OR 97801	503-378-5086 or 800-349-7677	Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Yamhill
Medford	221 Steward Ave. Ste. 201 Medford, OR 97501	541-776-6107 or 877-823-3216	Jackson, Josephine, Eastern Douglas County
Coos Bay	381 N Second St. Coos Bay, OR 97420	541-269-2721, Ext. 222	Coos, Curry, Western Douglas County
Bend	475 NE Bellevue Dr. Suite 110 Bend, OR 97701	541-633-2019 or 866-863-6668	Crook, Deschutes, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Sherman, Wasco
Pendleton	800 SE Emigrant Ave. Suite 330 Pendleton, OR 97801	541-278-4626 or 800-304-3513	Baker, Gilliam, Grant, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wheeler
Lane Regional Air Protection Agency	1010 Main St. Springfield, OR 97477	541-736-1056	Lane

Alternative Formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.



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