



ASBESTOS PIPE CUTTING WITH HSE APPROVAL

ICS PowerGrit Pipe Cutting Saw has been acknowledged by the HSE as the accepted way of cutting asbestos cement (AC) pipes. Trials and tests carried out by a water authority identified that the ICS 890 hydraulic PowerGrit Utility Pipe Saw keep the fibre levels below the control limit and therefore is an accepted method of cutting asbestos pipe.

The HSE also states that other similar equipment should not be used and that cut off saws even with water suppression release high levels of asbestos fibres so must never be used.

See overleaf is the main excerpt from the HSE publication, which can be found on the HSE website.



PowerGrit tested for asbestos cutting

HSE Information on asbestos pipe cutting

WARNING: Cut off saws must NOT be used even with water

This task is a maintenance task and therefore is non-licensed work.

Before work starts you will need to have carried out a risk assessment and have a written plan of work.

Training required

- Provision and use of PPE.
- Safe work with asbestos including decontamination procedures.
- Safe procedures for cutting asbestos pipes.
- Work in excavations.
- Safe operation and maintenance of the power tool.
- Hazardous waste handling and disposal.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Disposable overalls fitted with a hood.
- Boots without laces (Laced boots are hard to decontaminate).
- Respirator (APF of 20) face fit tested to the wearer.
- Rubber gloves (Gloves with cotton backs or cuffs must not be used).

Equipment

- Ladder access to excavation.
- 500 and 1000 gauge polythene sheeting and/or clear plastic asbestos waste bags.
- Duct tape.
- Water bowser or mains supply.
- **Power grit saw**

Preliminary checks

- Provide safe access to the excavation.
- Minimise the number of people present.
- Excavate to expose pipe and provide adequate clearance to operate power tool.
- Before starting work ensure there is a sufficient supply of water to provide a constant flow to the power tool. Use mains water or pumped water from a bowser. This type of bowser can be topped up without stopping the operation.
- Under no circumstances will the power tools be used dry.
- PPE and RPE as specified above must be worn.

Procedure

- Check power tool is in good working order.
- Set up the power tool following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure a good supply of water is reaching the cutting point.
- Carry out the cuts ensuring there is no release of dust. If dust is generated stop work immediately and investigate cause.

Clean up and decontamination

- On completion of the repair double bag the asbestos pipe, or wrap in the polythene sheeting, seal and clean outside of bag/wrapping before moving it out of the excavation.
- Thoroughly wash the power tool clean within the excavation before moving it out of the excavation.
- Thoroughly wash boots to remove all traces of asbestos before leaving excavation.
- If wearing waterproof clothing wash any areas contaminated with dirt before leaving the excavation.
- If ladder has been used for access then wash allowing the washings to fall into the excavation.
- Back fill excavation.
- Finally remove disposable PPE and double bag as asbestos waste removing RPE last.
- Wash hands and face.
- Remove asbestos to dedicated asbestos waste skip and dispose of as hazardous waste.

NOTE: Proper decontamination is important to ensure that no asbestos fibres are spread from the excavation or taken into a vehicle on boots or tools.

Useful Links: HSG47 Avoiding danger from underground services HSG53 RPE at work – A practical guide
Information, instruction and training Excavations: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cis64.pdf>