

# Asbestos Information

All information provided by the USEPA @:  
<http://www2.epa.gov/asbestos/learn-about-asbestos#asbestos>



## Learn About Asbestos

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Winchite-richterite asbestos, Colorado

### What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral fiber that occurs in rock and soil.

[Learn about vermiculite and asbestos-contaminated vermiculite insulation](#)

### Where Can I Find Asbestos?

Because of its fiber strength and heat resistance asbestos has been used in a variety of building construction materials for insulation and as a fire retardant. Asbestos has also been used in a wide range of manufactured goods, mostly in building materials (roofing shingles, ceiling and floor tiles, paper products, and asbestos cement products), friction products (automobile clutch, brake, and transmission parts), heat-resistant fabrics, packaging, gaskets, and coatings.



Asbestiform tremolite, California

[Most uses of asbestos are not banned. A few are banned under existing regulations.](#)

Where asbestos may be found:

- Attic and wall insulation produced containing [vermiculite](#)
- Vinyl floor tiles and the backing on vinyl sheet flooring and adhesives
- Roofing and siding shingles
- Textured paint and patching compounds used on wall and ceilings
- Walls and floors around wood-burning stoves protected with asbestos paper, millboard, or cement sheets
- Hot water and steam pipes coated with asbestos material or covered with an asbestos blanket or tape
- Oil and coal furnaces and door gaskets with asbestos insulation
- Heat-resistant fabrics
- Automobile clutches and brakes

Read more about other places where asbestos can be found:

- [Schools](#)
- [Workplace](#)
- [Soils and rock: naturally-occurring asbestos \(PDF\)](#) (7 pp, 277 K, [About PDF](#))
- [Drinking water](#)
- [Air: regulations](#)

## **How Can People Be Exposed to Asbestos?**

Asbestos fibers may be released into the air by the disturbance of asbestos-containing material during product use, demolition work, building or home maintenance, repair, and remodeling. In general, exposure may occur only when the asbestos-containing material is disturbed or damaged in some way to release particles and fibers into the air.

## **Health Effects From Exposure to Asbestos**

Exposure to asbestos increases your risk of developing lung disease. That risk is made worse by smoking. In general, the greater the exposure to asbestos, the greater the chance of developing harmful health effects.

Disease symptoms may take many years to develop following exposure.

Asbestos-related conditions can be difficult to identify. Healthcare providers usually identify the possibility of asbestos exposure and related health conditions like lung disease by taking a thorough medical history. This includes looking at the person's medical, work, cultural and environmental history.

After a doctor suspects an asbestos-related health condition, he or she can use a number of tools to help make the actual diagnosis. Some of these tools are physical examination, chest x-ray and

pulmonary function tests. Your doctor may also refer you to a specialist who treats diseases caused by asbestos.

Three of the major health effects associated with asbestos exposure are:

- lung cancer
- mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer that is found in the thin lining of the lung, chest and the abdomen and heart
- asbestosis, a serious progressive, long-term, non-cancer disease of the lungs

For more information on these and other health effects of asbestos exposure see the [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#), the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) and the [National Cancer Institute](#).

[Learn what to do to protect your family](#)

## U.S. Federal Bans on Asbestos

- [Banned products and uses](#)
- [Examples of asbestos-containing products not banned](#)
- [Regulatory history of asbestos bans](#)

### Banned products and uses

**Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA): Banned Manufacture, Importation, Processing and Distribution in Commerce of Certain Asbestos-containing Products**

- Corrugated paper
- Rollboard
- Commercial paper
- Specialty paper
- Flooring felt

In addition, the regulation continues to ban the use of asbestos in products that have not historically contained asbestos, otherwise referred to as “new uses” of asbestos.

**Under the Clean Air Act (CAA): Banned Asbestos-containing Uses**

- Asbestos pipe insulation and asbestos block insulation on facility components, such as boilers and hot water tanks, if the materials are either pre-formed (molded) and friable or wet-applied and friable after drying.
- Spray-applied surfacing asbestos-containing materials  
Spray-on application of materials containing more than 1% asbestos to buildings, structures, pipes, and conduits unless certain conditions specified under [40 CFR 61, Subpart M](#) are met.

## **Under the Consumer Product Safety Act (Consumer Product Safety Commission): Banned Products**

- Asbestos in artificial fireplace embers and wall patching compounds

## **Examples of asbestos-containing products not banned**

The manufacture, importation, processing and distribution in commerce of these products, as well as some others not listed, are not banned.

- Cement corrugated sheet
- Cement flat sheet
- Clothing
- Pipeline wrap
- Roofing felt
- Vinyl floor tile
- Cement shingle
- Millboard
- Cement pipe
- Automatic transmission components
- Clutch facings
- Friction materials
- Disk brake pads
- Drum brake linings
- Brake blocks
- Gaskets
- Non-roofing coatings
- Roof coatings

## **Regulatory history of asbestos bans**

- In 1973, EPA banned spray-applied surfacing asbestos-containing material for fireproofing/insulating purposes. See National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) at [40 CFR Part 61, Subpart M](#)
- In 1975, EPA banned installation of asbestos pipe insulation and asbestos block insulation on facility components, such as boilers and hot water tanks, if the materials are either pre-formed (molded) and friable or wet-applied and friable after drying. See National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) at [40 CFR Part 61, Subpart M](#)
- In 1978, EPA banned spray-applied surfacing materials for purposes not already banned. See National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) at [40 CFR Part 61, Subpart M](#)
- In 1977, the [Consumer Product Safety Commission \(CPSC\)](#) banned the use of asbestos in artificial fireplace embers and wall patching compounds. (See [16 CFR Part 1305](#) and [16 CFR 1304](#))

- In 1989, the EPA issued a final rule under Section 6 of Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) banning most asbestos-containing products. However, in 1991, this rule was vacated and remanded by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. As a result, most of the original ban on the manufacture, importation, processing, or distribution in commerce for the majority of the asbestos-containing products originally covered in the 1989 final rule was overturned.  
See [40 CFR 763 Subpart I](#).

[Asbestos Ban and Phase-Out Federal Register notices](#)

[Asbestos-containing products that remain banned](#)

[Examples of Asbestos-containing products not banned](#) (i.e, products no longer subject to the 1989 TSCA ban because it was overturned)

- In 1990, EPA prohibited spray-on application of materials containing more than 1% asbestos to buildings, structures, pipes, and conduits unless certain conditions specified. See National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) at [40 CFR 61, Subpart M](#) are met

- [EPA Home](#)

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