



## U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

### Region 2

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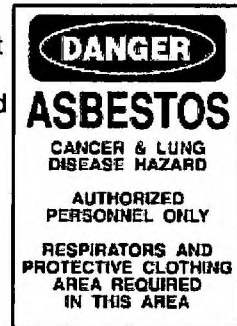
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## Asbestos

Asbestos is a durable, fire retardant mineral that resists corrosion, and insulates well. It is estimated that 3,000 different types of commercial products contain some amount of asbestos. The use of asbestos ranges from paper products and brake linings to floor tiles and insulation. Many of these uses were banned in the 1970s.

Asbestos fibers can cause serious health problems. If inhaled, these tiny fibers can cause normal functions of the lungs to be disturbed. Exposure increases the risk of developing lung cancer, mesothelioma, or asbestosis. The risk of lung cancer and mesothelioma increases with the number of fibers inhaled. The risk of lung cancer from inhaling asbestos fibers is also greater if you smoke. People who get asbestosis have usually been exposed to high levels of asbestos for a long time. The symptoms of these diseases do not usually appear until about 20 to 30 years after the first exposure to asbestos. *Most people exposed to small amounts of asbestos, as we all are in our daily lives, do not develop these health problems.*



Intact and undisturbed asbestos-containing material does not pose a health risk. Asbestos becomes a problem when, due to damage, disturbance, or deterioration over time, the material releases asbestos fibers into the air.

#### Links to Additional Asbestos Information

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## Contacts

If you have any questions concerning asbestos or would like to report illegal or improper asbestos activity, contact:

TSCA Hotline: (202) 554-1404  
Asbestos Hotline: (800) 368-5888

For information on this page, contact: [stapleton.richard@epa.gov](mailto:stapleton.richard@epa.gov)

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