



ASBESTOS FACTS

Asbestos describes six naturally occurring minerals that are known for their ability to resist heat and water, as well as for their strength and flexibility. Because of the microscopic nature of its fibers, asbestos poses a serious threat to the health of those who inhale the mineral.

Hazards of Asbestos

The Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), the Environmental Protection Agency and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) have all classified asbestos as a human carcinogen. Exposure to the mineral increases the likelihood of developing lung cancer or other asbestos related illnesses.

Uses of Asbestos in History

The durable nature of asbestos made the mineral a popular use as building materials such as insulation, roof shingles, pipe wrapping and plaster. For nearly 100 years asbestos was widely used in the construction of homes, ships, automobiles and more.

How Exposure Happens

People are most likely to be exposed to asbestos by breathing in asbestos fibers that are suspended in air. These fibers can come from the wearing down of disturbance of manufactured products.

The most common ways people are exposed to asbestos are:

- Military - many vessels used in the military were constructed with asbestos-containing materials.
- Consumer Products - many goods produced before the 1980s contain asbestos.
- Occupation - workers from a wide range of industries and trades were exposed to asbestos.
- Second-Hand - most commonly experienced by women, this form of exposure takes place when a loved one brings home asbestos fibers from work, usually on their clothing.

Who is at Risk

Asbestos can be found in millions of family homes that were built before the 1980s. Those who provide construction services or are remodeling their homes could be at risk to exposure.

More than 75 occupational groups have exposed employees to asbestos at the workplace. Health hazards from asbestos fibers have been recognized in workers exposed in the shipbuilding trades, asbestos mining and milling, manufacturing of asbestos textiles and other asbestos products, insulation work in the construction and building trades, and a variety of other trades.

Diseases Linked to Asbestos

Asbestos is known to be linked directly to multiple different illnesses. The following are the most commonly recognized:

- Mesothelioma - a rare form of cancer that most often occurs in the thin membrane lining of the lungs, chest or abdomen.
- Lung Cancer - Lung cancer can develop when a person has been exposed to a carcinogen. This cancer causes the largest number of asbestos-related deaths.
- Asbestosis - a serious, non-cancerous respiratory disease that can cause shortness of breath and severe chest pain.

An estimated 15,000 people in the United States pass away from asbestos related illnesses each year.

If you or a loved one have been exposed to asbestos and contracted an illness as a direct result, contact an attorney at Simmons Hanly Conroy to learn what you can do next. Call 1.866.468.8631.