Asbestos is a generic term that refers to several silicate materials occurring naturally as fibrous rocks. Insignificant amounts of asbestos fiber can be found in ambient air, but this, and materials containing hard asbestos, usually do not create problems. Soft materials, however, can release high amounts of asbestos fibers into the air, and exposure to high levels of the fibers have been found to cause such diseases as asbestosis, lung cancer, mesothelioma, and other cancers. This guide is intended to assist those who wish to research the uses, dangers, and problems of asbestos. It is designed to provide the reader with a set of resources found in the Library of Congress that can be used to focus on the topic. The document lists the subject headings used by the Library of Congress in cataloging information on asbestos. It also contains citations of materials categorized as: (1) brief introductions; (2) basic texts; (3) additional titles; (4) handbooks and encyclopedias; (5) other bibliographies; (6) conference proceedings; (7) government publications; (8) abstracting and indexing services; (9) journal articles; (10) technical reports; and (11) additional sources of information. (TW)
ASBESTOS
Compiled by Joanna Evans

January 1987

SCOPE: Asbestos is a generic term that refers to several silicate materials occurring naturally as fibrous rocks in two forms: serpentine and amphibole. Approximately nine-tenths of all asbestos produced is chrysotile, a serpentine form, and mined chiefly in Canada and the U.S.S.R. Amosite and crocidolite are amphibole forms which are mined primarily in South Africa and comprise approximately one-tenth of asbestos production.

Asbestos is used in a variety of industries such as the construction industry (for roofing, plastics, insulation, floor tiling, and cement production), the automotive industry (for friction material in brake and clutch linings), and in the textile industry (for fire-resistant clothing, safety equipment, and curtains). Asbestos may also be used to strengthen the resistance of materials to the effects of heat.

Insignificant amounts of asbestos fiber can be found in ambient air. Materials that contain hard asbestos usually do not create problems. It is the soft, or friable, materials that can release high amounts of asbestos fibers into the air.

Exposure to high levels of asbestos fibers can cause such diseases as asbestosis, lung cancer, mesothelioma, and other cancers. Inhalation can occur from fibers transported in the clothing of workers or from direct contact with materials containing asbestos. Serious health effects can occur years after initial exposure. Thus there has been deep concern by government agencies, environmental groups, and the public about the presence of friable asbestos in buildings, especially schools. Current controversies include questions on the "safe" thresholds of asbestos exposure, the laboratory evaluation of the various types of fibers with respect to their role as causative agents of disease, and the abatement of asbestos from buildings that are considered hazardous to the health of their occupants.¹

This guide is intended to assist those who wish to research the uses, dangers, and problems of asbestos. Not intended to be a comprehensive bibliography, this Tracer Bullet is designed—as the name of the series implies—to put the reader "on target."

¹ See also Tracer Bullet 86-8, Indoor Air Pollution.
INTRODUCTIONS


SUBJECT HEADINGS used by the Library of Congress, under which books on asbestos can be located in most card, book, and online catalogs, include the following:

ASBESTOS (Highly relevant)
ASBESTOS INDUSTRY (Highly relevant)
ASBESTOS--TOXICOLOGY (Relevant)
ASBESTOS DUST (Relevant)
ASBESTOS FIBERS (Relevant)
ASBESTOS IN BUILDING (Relevant)
ASBESTOSIS (Relevant)
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (More general)
OCcupATIONAL DISEASES (More general)
POLUTANTS--TOXICOLOGY (More general)

SELECTED TEXTS


*Available in the reference collection, Science Reading Room


**HANDBOOKS, ENCYCLOPEDIAS, AND DIRECTORIES**


**Bibliography**

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BIBLIOGRAPHIES


CONFERENCES PROCEEDINGS

"Based on Health Hazards of Asbestos Exposure, the proceedings of a conference held in New York in June 1978 by the New York Academy of Sciences, which were published as vol. 330 of the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences."


GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

Bibliography: v. 3, p. 879-920.


ABSTRACTING AND INDEXING SERVICES that index relevant journal articles and other literature are listed below. The subject headings ASBESTOS and ASBESTOSIS may be useful for searching.

Abstracts on Health Effects of Environmental Pollutants (1972-)
RA565.A1A26*

Applied Science & Technology Index (1913-)
Z7913.I7*

Biological Abstracts (1926-)
QH301.B37*

Biological & Agricultural Index (1916-)
Z5073.A46*

Chemical Abstracts (1907-)
QD1.A51*

Current Technology Index (1962-)
Z7913.E7*

Energy Research Abstracts (1976-)
Z5853.P83U544b*

Engineering Index (1884-)
Z5851.E62*

Environment Abstracts (1971-)
GF1.E553*

Environment Index (1971-)
Z5322.E2E57*

Environmental Periodicals Bibliography (1972-)
Z5863.E57E58*

General Science Index (1978-)
Z7401.G46*

Index Medicus (1960-)
Z6660.I422*

Magazine Index (1981-) uncataloged

Note: Consult reference librarian for location of abstracting and indexing services in the Science Reading Room.
JOURNALS which often contain articles on asbestos include:

- Environment UF767.S33
- Environmental Health Perspectives: EHP RA565.A1E13
- Environmental Research RA565.E53
- Journal of Environmental Health RA565.A1S3
- Journal of Occupational Medicine RC963.A42
- Journal of the Air Pollution Control Association TD883.A48

REPRESENTATIVE JOURNAL ARTICLES


REPORTS and other types of literature, major sources of current research, and studies in the field of asbestos are indexed in the following guides:

**EPA Publications Bibliography (1976-)** Z5863.P7U58a*
See: Asbestos

**Government Reports Announcements & Index (1946-)** Z7916.G78*
See: Asbestos
Asbestosis

**NTIS Title Index on Microfiche (1964-)**
See: Keyword Asbestos

SELECTED TECHNICAL REPORTS sold by the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Virginia 22161, include the following:

"EPA/600/D-86/058."


"EPA/600/2-86/053."

"EPA/600/J-83/252."

Review of the scientific basis for EPA's (Environmental Protection Agency's) school asbestos hazard program, with recommendations to state health officials. Cincinnati, Ohio, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Oct. 1984. 24 p. PB85-221448**

**Available in the microform collection, Science Reading Room

SELECTED MATERIALS available in the Science Reading Room pamphlet boxes include:


**ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

Asbestos Information Association/North America  
1745 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Suite 509  
Arlington, Virginia 22202  
Telephone: (703) 979-1150

Environmental Protection Agency  
Southeastern Asbestos Information Center  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
151 Sixth Street  
O'Keefe Building, Room 029  
Atlanta, Georgia 30318  
Telephone: (404) 894-3806

Environmental Sciences Laboratory  
Mount Sinai School of Medicine of the City of New York  
1 Gustave L. Levy Place  
New York, New York 10029  
Telephone: (212) 650-6174

National Asbestos Council  
2786 N. Decatur Road  
Suite 240  
Decatur, Georgia 30033  
Telephone: (404) 292-3802

National Asbestos Training Center  
University of Kansas  
5005 W. 95th Street  
Overland Park, Kansas 66207  
Telephone: (913) 648-5790