

of the total products of wear. In tests carried out by research staff of the Ford Motor Company, Detroit, on a production disc brake³, less than 0.02 per cent of the lining wear was released as asbestos fibres.

Amount not harmful

Asbestosis is a disease associated with the inhalation of high concentrations of asbestos fibres over many years. The British Occupational Hygiene Society has published a Hygiene Standard for Chrysotile Asbestos Dust which is designed to virtually eliminate the risk of developing the earliest recognisable clinical signs of asbestosis. This standard is the basis of those which apply under the Asbestos Regulations 1969, to work with asbestos and asbestos products. The minimisation of asbestosis has, at the same time, minimised any associated risk of lung cancer.

Tests made in the urban atmosphere have recorded the presence of asbestos in amounts at least 1,000 times below those regarded as the standard for chrysotile dust in occupational situations. There is no evidence that this trace amount of asbestos in the urban environment can cause damage to the lungs of the general public.⁴

Thus the risk of contracting asbestosis or lung cancer through the application of brakes on motor vehicles is negligible for the general public.

The risk of contracting mesothelioma (a rare tumour which has been mainly associated with crocidolite (blue) asbestos) can be virtually discounted as this type of asbestos is not used in the manufacture of brake linings. It is recognised that chrysotile asbestos is less likely to produce mesothelioma and where it has done so the dust levels to which the cases were exposed were greater than could occur in the urban air as the result of vehicles applying their brakes.

"Asbestos bodies" may be found in the lungs of people in random series of autopsies. The presence of asbestos bodies does not necessarily imply a connection with asbestos-associated disease nor is it an indication of it. Where large numbers of asbestos bodies have been found they have invariably been the result of occupational, not general environmental exposure.

Occupational exposure

The only possibility of a risk to health from brake and clutch linings arises in their manufacture and where regular or continuous machining and maintenance