14. Q: Do all of These Products Cause Exposure Problems?

A: NO. The important question is how easily will the material release asbestos fibers. Materials which can be crumbled in the hand are termed FRIABLE. If friable asbestos-containing material is subject to pressure or vibration, it can release asbestos fibers which can be inhaled. In some asbestos-containing materials, such as vinyl floor tile, the asbestos fibers are firmly bound together or encased. These materials will not release asbestos fibers unless they are cut, ground, or sanded.

15. Q: What Kinds of Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools is EPA Concerned About?

A: EPA is concerned about friable asbestos-containing materials that were used for fireproofing, insulation, or decoration. Friable materials are usually found on overhead surfaces, steel beams, and ceilings and occasionally on walls and pipes.

16. Q: Were All Friable Asbestos-Containing Materials Applied by Spraying?

A: Most were applied by spraying, but some were applied by troweling. The sprayed materials are usually friable. The materials which were applied by troweling vary from soft to hard. Hard materials are not friable, but they may release asbestos fibers if damaged.

17. Q: How Serious a Problem do These Friable Materials Present?

A: The problem varies significantly from building to building depending on the condition of the material, its accessibility, and other factors.

18. Q: How Extensive is the Problem?

A: EPA does not know how many schools have asbestos exposure problems. This information will become available as schools are inspected and the inspection results are reported to EPA. The October 1978 survey indicated that about 5% of the public schools in the country have been inspected. Those States that inspected all (or nearly all) schools reported asbestos-containing materials present in 1% - 5% of their schools.