FILE NAME: Drywall Spackling Compounds (DWSC)

DATE: 1976 July

DOC#: DWSC028

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Newspaper Article with BC Notes and Attached Letter

# Ban Urged on Wa

By Henry Gilgoff
Newsday Consumer Writer

Consumers Union joined with an organization that concerns itself with environmental issues yesterday to call for a federal ban on wall-patching compounds that are sold to consumers and contain asbestos fibers, believed to cause cancer.

The consumer group, publisher of Consumer Reports, and the Washington-based Natural Resources Defense Council petitioned the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission yesterday to ban wall-patching compounds with asbestos. The petition is being reviewed by the federal agency, according to Albert Dimoff, associate executive director of the product safety commission.

The products in question are commonly known to consumers as spackling compound. Spackle is the trademark name of just one of the products in this market, the Muralo Company's Spackle. Richard Norton, president of that company, said that Spackle has never contained asbestos.)

For the most part, though, consumers have no way of knowing whether a wall-patching product contains asbestos. The petition's statement estimated that one-third to one-half of the patching compounds in the U.S. contain asbestos and that much more than 1 million consumers each year.

Ruby Compton, an attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said that the petition stemmed from research done by a team of scientists at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in Manhattan and published in the journal Science last year. Arthur M. Langer, one of the members of that Mount Sinai team, said that 13 wallware stores in the New York City area had been tested and that five of them had contained asbestos. Eleven of the samples tested were bought in 1974, the remainder in 1972 or earlier. As a result of these and other tests, Langer said, the research team had recommended that the asbestos be removed from the products.

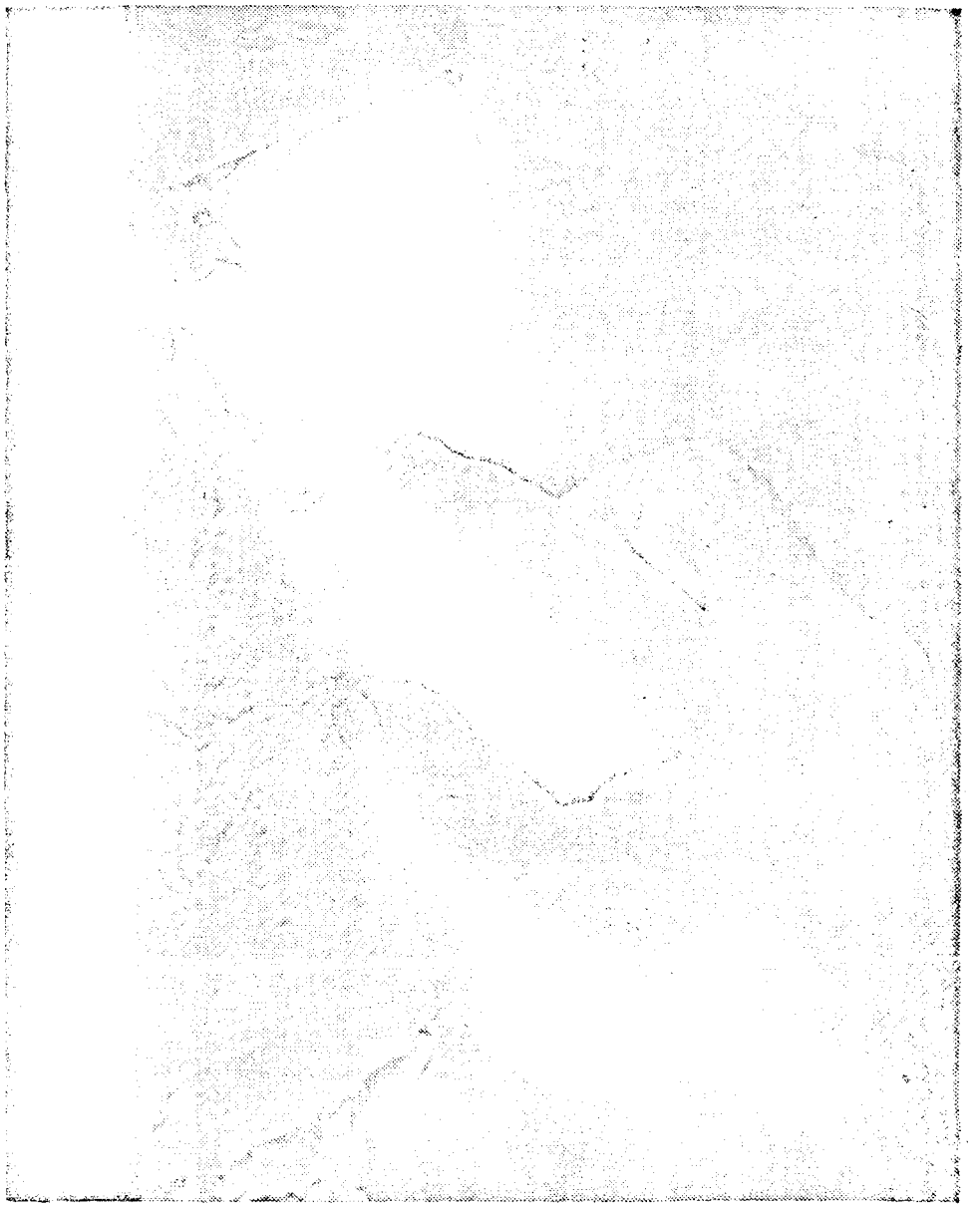
"The asbestos fibers found in these compounds are released into the air during the mixing process [dry form] and during the sanding process [dry and paste form]," the joint petition said. "The asbestos fibers are also released into the air at subsequent times when the walls are sanded or repaired or torn down for replacement . . . The asbestos fibers disperse to adjacent rooms and remain in the air and in the rugs and furniture well after the repair work is completed."

Langer declined to name the products tested because of policies of his research center. The names, themselves, do not provide a clear guide to the marketplace situation. For example, one tested product purchased in 1972 had no asbestos, but the same product purchased in 1974, did.

Dimoff of the product safety commission said that the agency has been aware of the Mount Sinai findings, which were published Aug. 15 last year with no brand names mentioned. But, he said, the issue is not clear-cut. For one thing, he said, it may be that asbestos is a cancer-causing agent only at certain levels and it would have to be determined that the products in question reached those levels. Compton countered that certain case studies have indicated that "brief exposures" may cause cancer. And, she noted, the absence of asbestos in many of the products [illegible]

NEWSDAY 7/16/7

# ll-Patch Products



Newsday Photo by David L. Pokress

Safety of wall-patching compounds is being questioned

**Barry I. Castleman** ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT / 1738 Riggs Place, North West, Washington, D.C. 20009/202 - 387 - 7595

July 22, 1976

Henry,

Thanks for your note. I enclose table by Rohl on industrial drywall compound procured from construction sites. Though Muralo came up clean in Rohl's analyses of their consumer drywall products, their industrial product had chrysotile asbestos. For details call Art Rohl. (212-650-6172

I'll be on vacance when you return but keep in touch on this, please. (NRDC is New York-based, by the way)

Barry

(Try spackle with a small "s"!)

**Newsday** / 550 Stewart Avenue, Garden City, Long Island, New York 11530

*Henry Gilgoff* Telephone (516) 294-3183

Dear Barry,

Thanks again for sending me the material. Enclosed you'll find a story we did on the petition. I do plan to follow up on this. I'm going on a two-week vacation. So, I'll be getting back to you sometime after that. One point that concerned me. In the material sent me, a copy enclosed, is a page that says that (spackle) from the Muralo Co. has asbestos. My story quoted the president of the company as saying that Spackle with a capital S has "never" had asbestos. Now, I hope that never does not turn out to be too long a time and the story therefore inaccurate in this regard. I already have a call in on that and would appreciate

-over-

it if you could figure out the source for the listing of Spackle under "Drywall compounds in which asbestos has been found."

Sincerely,

Henry Gilgoff