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Wall-Repair Goods Are Said to Contain Carcinogenic Fibers

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Some Patching Compounds Have Perilous Asbestos, Studies Say; Ban Aske

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL *Staff Reporter*

WASHINGTON—Some of the compounds used for patching and repairing interior walls contain cancer-causing asbestos fibers and should be banned, two public-interest organizations contended.

In a petition to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Natural Resources Defense Council and Consumers Union estimated that between a third and a half of the patching compounds sold in the U.S. would be subject to such a ban. It cited products sold by Mobil Corp.'s Montgomery Ward Inc. subsidiary and by Georgia-Pacific Corp. as among those that allegedly pose a health hazard.

When asbestos fibers are inhaled, they greatly increase the danger of cancer of the lungs, the lining of the lungs and the abdomen. The petition cited medical studies showing very high concentrations of the fibers in the air after asbestos-containing compounds were used for dry wall repairs. Asbestos gets into the air both when powdered compounds are mixed with water to create a patching paste and when patched places are sanded after the paste dries, the studies showed.