

5. ECONOMICS

No information has been found in the literature on the damage costs or economic losses due to the effects of asbestos air pollution on humans, animals, plants, or materials. However, a large fraction of the people in the United States have been exposed to asbestos, including the following:

- (1) approximately 100,000 workers using asbestos in their occupations,
- (2) approximately 3,500,000 construction workers exposed indirectly to asbestos as they work with asbestos products or near those who handle asbestos products,
- (3) approximately 50,000,000 Americans who possibly have "asbestos bodies" in their lungs.

No attempt has been made to assess the cost of health impairment for these people. Workmen's compensation laws for dust diseases are in effect in most States. ²³⁴

No information has been found on the cost of the present and future abatement of air pollution by asbestos in this country. The data in Table 16 in the Appendix, which refer to the asbestos industry in Britain,⁹⁵ show that the dust extraction equipment cost alone, for a given size and type of plant, amounts to 27.5 percent of the total capital cost and approximately 7 percent of the operating cost of that plant. The type of control equipment used is primarily designed to meet government specifications relating to occupational health standards.

Data on the production and consumption of asbestos are presented in Section 3.

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