

SCHOOL HAZARD ACT: MORE CERTIFICATION EMPHASIS

The New Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act Provides Money For Schools to Address Their Asbestos Problems While Placing Greater Emphasis on Certification For Qualified Contractors

President Reagan signed the Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act (ASHAA). The ASHAA legislation established a loan and grant program to assist primary and secondary schools, both public and private, in conducting asbestos abatement activities. Only those schools with a severe asbestos hazard who could not afford to abate the hazard on their own were eligible for loans and grants.

The ASHAA legislation authorized the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to spend \$600 million over a seven year period. In fiscal year 1985, the first year of the program, Congress appropriated \$50 million for loans, grants, and EPA technical assistance activities. On June 7, 1985, EPA awarded \$45 million in loans and grants to 340 schools throughout the country.

This year, Congress has appropriated another \$50 million. In doing so, however, Congress has included an additional requirement that schools must meet in order to receive ASHAA loans and grants.

Aware of instances of poor quality abatement work, Congress is requiring that schools receiving federal funding in 1986 *hire only those asbestos abatement contractors who are either State certified or who have attended an EPA-approved training course*. Specifically, the 1986 ASHAA program requires at a minimum that all supervisors and a majority of non-supervisory workers must be State certified or have attended an EPA approved training course.

In states with asbestos abatement certification and training programs, the Congressional requirement means that contractors whose employees meet that State's requirements may

conduct ASHAA work. The fourteen states that currently have programs are Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee and Washington. Since contractors in Tennessee require only supervisors to have training, EPA is requiring for the ASHAA program in Tennessee that a majority of a firm's workers receive training as well.

EPA estimates that within a year an additional 9 States will have active programs. California, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Utah and Vermont all have recently passed legislation.

In those States without certification and training programs, schools receiving ASHAA funding may only hire those contractors whose supervisors and greater than 50 percent of