

3. SOURCES

3.1 Natural Occurrence

Asbestos is a broad term embracing several fibrous minerals. The minerals are divided into two groups: (1) Pyroxenes—chrysotile; (2) Amphiboles—crocidolite, amosite, tremolite, actinolite, and anthophyllite. Properties of these minerals are listed in Table 7 of the Appendix.

Asbestos probably occurs in nearly every country in the world, but only a few of the deposits are commercially valuable. Over 90 percent of the world asbestos production is chrysotile, and Canada is the major source of this mineral for the United States.⁹³ Table 8 in the Appendix lists the world production. From these figures an estimate of known free-world deposits is possible.

It is noteworthy that some soils near asbestos mines contain considerable quantities of asbestos. In Finland, farmers working these high-asbestos-content soils have been observed to suffer from asbestosis.¹²⁰

3.1.1 Mines

The mining of asbestos in the United States has increased 180 percent in the last 10 years. (See Table 9 in the Appendix.) This mining may constitute a source of air pollution. A high percentage of the increase in domestic production has been credited to California producers, who accounted for 65 percent of the total output in 1966. Four

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