



POINT OF INFORMATION
D.H.Y.

Asbestos Linked To Lung Cancer

By RACHEL SCOTT
Knight Newspapers Writer

WASHINGTON — The common mineral asbestos may be a Trojan horse for a wide-scale epidemic of lung cancer, according to a report prepared by Litton Systems for the National Air Pollution Control Administration. Asbestos is used in about

2,000 products. It is the only mineral that can be woven into cloth as strong as wire, heat and fire resistant and practically immune to decay.

But its harmful effects on people are causing growing concern among scientists.

According to the Litton report, "asbestos bodies have

been observed in the lungs in random autopsies of one-fourth to one-half of the population of Pittsburgh, Miami and San Francisco, and will probably be found in the people of every large city.

"The number of people exposed to asbestos," the report states, "has been estimated to be 100,000 asbestos workers,

3.5 million people working in areas where asbestos is handled in ways which emit small quantities of dust, and 50 to 100 million people who have breathed or will breathe its fibers."

While finding some fibers may not necessarily mean disease will follow, the potential that it may "is what is worrying all of us," Dr. Irving J. Selikoff said.

Selikoff, director of the environmental sciences laboratory at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, is considered the leading authority on asbestos hazards.

FOR HIS latest studies, Selikoff said, exposure to asbestos appears to be even more widespread than the Litton report indicates.

Asbestos is particularly hazardous to the lungs because its particles, once inhaled, remain in the lungs forever.

One out of five asbestos workers dies of and one out of 11 of mesothelioma, Selikoff said. Mesothelioma is a cancer of the lung cavity which afflicts 10,000 in the population.

Asbestosis, a lung disease with similar to emphysema, is a common cause among asbestos workers. testimony before subcommittee on December.

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