U.S. Consumer Product
Safety Commission • Washington, D.C. 20207

NEWS RELEASE

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CPSC BANS USE OF ASBESTOS IN CERTAIN CONSUMER PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Apr. 28) -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) today announced plans to ban consumer patching compounds containing asbestos or asbestiform tremolitic talc as well as artificial fireplace logs and ashes containing asbestos.

The Commission's action today was in response to petitions before it. According to the Commission, asbestos can be a cancer-causing substance and has been shown to be harmful to humans if inhaled.

The Natural Resources Defense Council, a public interest group, joined by Consumers Union, asked CPSC to ban the use of asbestos in consumer patching (spacklin compounds. The Commission also granted (in part) a petition from the Health Research Group regarding a ban of asbestiform tremolitic talc in spackling compounds because of the cancer risk from free-form asbestos fibers.

Patching compound sold to consumers is either premixed or in dry powdered form for mixing with water. It is applied to sheet rock either to fill a hole or mask a seam and, when dry, is sanded smooth. Asbestos fibers may be released into the air during mixing and/or sanding.

Rachel Scott, a consumer, and the Environmental Defense Fund petitioned CPSC to ban asbestos used as ashes for gas fireplaces. This product is intended to simulate flowing ashes.

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The Commission has directed its technical staff to provide, within the next few days, recommendations for consumer disposal of these three products. Additionally, the staff will be gathering information for the Commissioners on other consumer products containing asbestos along with recommendations for possible regulatory action.

The Commission expects to determine which legal route to take in banning these three products in the next few days.

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