

It may be seen from Table 11-4 that the usage of asbestos fibres in asbestos-cement products is easily the largest. The U.K. has a comparatively large production of fire-resistant insulation boards. Insulation products used a relatively small tonnage in 1973 and this was probably due to the availability of acceptable substitutes. Group 10 in Table 11-4 is made up of many products of which felts, millboard and paper can be regarded as the most important.

Although this chapter is primarily concerned with the usage of asbestos and asbestos-containing products in the EEC, a few remarks may be added on activities which are non-specific for these products, but nevertheless, involve them and could cause the emission of asbestos dust. These concern the transportation of asbestos fibres and finished asbestos goods, demolition of asbestos-containing structures and the removal and storage of asbestos waste.

Asbestos fibres are generally packed in impermeable bags and shipped loose, on pallets or in containers; containers can be filled with loose bags or with units containing 20 or more bags. It is fairly certain that the movement of the loose bags constitutes a greater hazard through the possibility of bag damage and the consequent release of fibres. This hazard is considerably reduced by palletisation and is completely eliminated when containers are used. It is difficult to provide precise information as to the proportions of the three methods, as they vary from country to country. In the U.K. the largest part is containerised while the remainder is shipped on pallets. For the other countries in the EEC, it is likely that about half of the total tonnage is containerised and the remaining tonnage is in loose bags. The bags are in the majority made of an impermeable plastic. Jute and paper bags are still used, mainly in shipments from the USSR and Italy, but these are now gradually being replaced by the plastic bags. It appears likely that by 1978 most of the fibre tonnage for EEC countries will be shipped in containers with the asbestos fibre packed in impermeable plastic bags.

Shipments of asbestos-containing products rarely provide any risk as the asbestos fibres are bonded and cannot easily escape into the atmosphere. Fibrous mixtures are normally packed in impermeable bags and shipped as in the case of fibres.

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