

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous silicate which has been used extensively in industry as thermal insulation. The proven or suspected effects of asbestos minerals on human health include nonmalignant changes, such as pulmonary and pleural fibrosis, and several types of cancer, notably of the lungs, pleura and peritoneum. These adverse health effects have occurred primarily in workers engaged in the mining and milling of asbestos, the manufacture of asbestos-containing products, and in the application and removal of asbestos insulating materials.

Some of the adverse health effects which are related to asbestos exposure are:

- Asbestosis: This is a diffuse fibrotic lung condition which may include calcification of the pleura. Asbestosis may result in finger clubbing, shortness of breath and physiologic changes consistent with a restrictive lung disorder.
- Pleural Calcification: This condition is characterized by calcified plaques which rarely appear until 20 years after the first exposure.
- Bronchogenic Carcinoma: Cancer of the lungs, more often in the lower lobes.
- Mesothelial Tumors: Cancer of the pleura and peritoneum (membrane lining of the chest and abdomen).

There is a solid evidence that exposure to asbestos dust and smoking of cigarettes contribute synergistically to the development of lung cancer in men.

In order to reduce the risk associated with working around asbestos, we strongly urge compliance with state and federal regulations concerning asbestos. For your convenience a copy of OSHA's Asbestos Standard (29 CFR 1910.1001) and the Environmental Protection Agency's regulations (40 CFR Part 61) are attached.

REFERENCES

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