

## **A New Requirement to Label Building Materials that Contain Asbestos**

The 2013 Legislature passed a law requiring labeling for certain building materials that contain asbestos.

Asbestos is a naturally-occurring mineral fiber. Because of its strength and heat resistance, asbestos has been used in a variety of building construction materials. Today, asbestos-containing building materials are still imported, sold, and used in the United States. Asbestos is harmful to human health.

### **Who does the new law affect?**

The new law applies to manufacturers, wholesalers, or distributors of asbestos-containing building materials.

### **What the law requires**

Effective January 1, 2014, the marketers of products described above must prominently label both the product and packaging for the following building materials:

- Any building material naturally containing more than one percent asbestos.
- Any building material that has any amount of asbestos added to it.

### **Where to put the label**

Put the label:

- In a prominent location near the product name or description on the exterior wrapping or packaging in which the product is stored, shipped, and sold.
- On the exterior surface of the asbestos-containing building material itself, unless it is sold as a liquid or paste or unless it is sand or gravel.

### **WHY IT MATTERS**

Asbestos causes painful, premature death due to asbestosis, mesothelioma, lung and gastrointestinal cancers, and other diseases and cancers.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began regulating asbestos in 1973 and banned most use of asbestos in 1989. However, that rule was overturned a few years later.

Because few regulations exist requiring the disclosure of asbestos in building materials, people can unknowingly be exposed to asbestos.

The purpose of this law is to allow people to make informed decisions about whether to purchase or use building materials containing asbestos.

### **Contact information**

Contact Ecology or your local clean air agency for more information. To find contact information for your area, go to <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/local.html>

### **Special accommodations**

If you need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Air Quality Program at 360-407-6800.

Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

### What the label should say

At a minimum, the label must read:

**CAUTION!** This product contains **ASBESTOS**, which is known to cause cancer and lung disease. Avoid creating dust. Intentionally removing or tampering with this label is a violation of state law.

### Exemptions

#### Labeling

The labeling requirement does not apply to:

- Retailers that do not manufacture, wholesale or distribute asbestos-containing building materials are exempt from the labeling requirements.
- Asbestos-containing building materials that:
  - Have already been installed, applied or used by the consumer; or
  - Are used solely for United States Military purposes.

#### Building materials

The term “building materials” does not include products designed for:

- Automobiles;
- Recreational vehicles;
- Boats; or
- Other mobile means of transportation.

#### How to request an exemption

Any manufacturer, wholesaler, or distributor may request an exemption from the labeling requirement if affixing a label is technically infeasible or creates an undue economic hardship. Exemption requests must be submitted in writing to:

Department of Ecology  
Air Quality Program  
Asbestos Labeling  
PO Box 47600  
Lacey, WA 98504-7600

#### Information for consumers

People using asbestos-containing building materials should avoid creating and breathing dust. Before starting a project involving asbestos-containing materials, contact Ecology or a local clean air agency to learn about regulations and requirements for disturbing or handling asbestos-containing materials.