Asbestos is contained in thousands of products, from building materials and adhesives, fireproofing materials to consumer products. The use of asbestos has dramatically declined since the 1980s, and more than 50 countries have banned its use. However, one type of asbestos is still being used to make certain products in the U.S., and EPA is working to ban it. It’s called chrysotile, or white asbestos.

Chrysotile is the most common type of asbestos. Its soft, flexible fibers form a serpentine material that’s strong, heat resistant to 3000 degrees and non-conductive. Some chlor-alkali manufacturing plants that make chlorine and sodium hydroxide and some vehicle brake and sheet gasket manufacturers still import and use chrysotile asbestos in their products.

**The EPA Ban on Chrysotile**

EPA has issued a proposed rule to ban chrysotile asbestos in the following products:

* Chrysotile asbestos used in bulk or in asbestos diaphragms in the chlor-alkali industry beginning two years after the effective date of the final rule;
* Chrysotile asbestos-containing sheet gaskets in chemical production beginning two years after the effective date of the final rule;
* Chrysotile asbestos-containing brake blocks used in the oil industry;
* Chrysotile asbestos-containing aftermarket automotive brakes/linings and other friction products, including for consumer use; and
* Chrysotile asbestos-containing gaskets, including for consumer use.

Asbestos diaphragms are used by chlor-alkali plants for the water treatment industry, but that use has been declining. EPA estimates only 9 chlor-alkali plants in the U.S. still use asbestos diaphragms as there are other alternatives, accounting for only 33% of all chlor-alkali plants. EPA was not able to quantify the scope of asbestos use in the brake and gasket industries.

EPA’s rule would also include targeted disposal and recordkeeping requirements that would take effect 180 days after the effective date.

**Other Upcoming Asbestos Studies by EPA**

As part of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), asbestos was one of 10 chemical substances on a list to be studied and put through a risk evaluation. EPA decided to do the evaluation in two parts. The first part was the risk evaluation for chrysotile, leading to this ruling on banning it. In Part 2, EPA will be looking at a number of other issues related to asbestos, including:

* Different types of asbestos (amphibole-type asbestos such as crocidolite, amosite, tremolite)
* Legacy uses of asbestos in commercial, industrial and consumer products
* Disposal phases
* Occupational exposure
* Consumer and bystander exposure
* General population exposure
* Potential exposed or susceptible subpopulations (children, workers, smokers, others)

In addition, EPA will be evaluating asbestos-containing talc and vermiculite. This does not apply to talc used in makeup, but talc that’s imported and used in industrial, commercial and consumer products such as filler/putty, crayons with talc-containing asbestos and toy crime scene kits with talc-containing asbestos. EPA will be looking at the import of this talc, distribution of it in commerce and its disposal. Vermiculite was used in building materials, and 70% of all vermiculite sold in the U.S. was extracted from an open pit mine in Libby, Montana until it closed in 1990.

EPA is accepting public comments on the proposed rule for chrysotile asbestos  at [https://www.regulations.gov/](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.regulations.gov%2F&data=04%7C01%7CGillespie.Taylor%40epa.gov%7C1f6ac08653864974598408da171f2be4%7C88b378b367484867acf976aacbeca6a7%7C0%7C0%7C637847719933714072%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=XhhJqbzIllAHB2D1YWAHH0GUtNty1PiWQtqW8ubNICI%3D&reserved=0).