Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Joint Press Release

HEALTH AND WELFARE CANADA

CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS

1975-85
May 28, 1975

PROPOSED REGULATIONS

ON ASBESTOS

OTTAWA - Consumer and Corporate Affairs Minister André Ouellet and Health and Welfare Minister Marc Lalonde today alerted industries and consumers to impending regulations that would ban the importation of blue asbestos (crocidolite) and the sale of consumer products containing free asbestos fibres, such as some humidifier plates, certain types of modelling clay and joint cement. The sale of non-consumer products containing asbestos would also be regulated so that they would bear labels which give information on their contents and safe use.

Asbestos is the generic name for several related minerals that differ in their chemical and physical properties. All are regarded as potentially dangerous.

Research has revealed that inhalation of free asbestos fibres is a potential health hazard, which can result in cancer. The danger exists for those living in the vicinity of plants which use asbestos as well as those working within the plants. Experience outside of Canada shows that the hazard may be greater with blue asbestos. Although blue asbestos is not mined in Canada, it is imported in small amounts from South Africa for use in the manufacture of asbestos-cement sewer and water pipes.

No danger exists for consumers, however, from the presence of blue asbestos in water pipes, since these fibres are not released from the solidified asbestos-cement mixture. The hazard is primarily associated with inhalation of these fibres during the handling or manufacturing process. For this reason, the Ministers asked industry to make changes in their processing which will eliminate the use of blue asbestos as soon as possible without depleting the supply of asbestos-cement pipe to municipalities where it is essential and to accelerate current efforts to introduce control procedures during the manufacturing process to prevent the circulation of free asbestos fibres in the atmosphere.

The labelling of other forms of asbestos and non-consumer products containing asbestos would alert workers, unions, management and the public. Proper precautions could be taken to avoid inhalation of dust from these sources.

The Ministers indicated that the new Hazardous Products Act regulations would be announced shortly.

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Corporate ... corporations

Consumer Standards Directorate — Direction générale des normes

Product Safety Branch — Direction de la sécurité des produits

(PSB-IC-001)

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TRADE COMMUNIQUE

ASBESTOS IN TOYS AND MODELLING MATERIALS
ISSUE NO 1

December 10, 1975.

In line with the policy stated in the attached release from the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and the Minister of Health and Welfare it is proposed to ban modelling materials containing asbestos and toys which may release asbestos. The following is the proposed item for inclusion in Part I of the Schedule to the Hazardous Products Act.

24. Products that contain asbestos of any type, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, that contain actinolite, amosite, anthophyllite, chrysotile, crocidolite, cummingtonite or tremolite and that are for use

a) in modelling or sculpture, or

b) by a child in learning or in play and that are made in such a way that asbestos may be released from the product.

It is proposed that the effective date will be the date of proclamation. After that date it would be an offence to advertise, sell or import into Canada the above described products.

Asbestos has been used to make modelling materials. Airborne fibres are generated at two different stages, during mixing of the modelling material

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COMMUNIQUE AUX ENTREPRISES

AMIANTE DANS LES JOUETS ET PATES A MODELER
PUBLICATION NO 1

Le 10 décembre 1975.

Conformément à la politique énoncée par le Ministre de la Consommation et des Corporations et celui de la Santé nationale et du Bien-être social dans le communiqué ci-joint, il est proposé d'interdire la pâte à modeler qui contient de l'amiante et les jouets qui en dégagent. Conséquemment, on propose d'ajouter l'article suivant à la partie I de l'annexe de la Loi sur les produits dangereux.

24. Les produits contenant de l'amiante de tout genre et, sans pour autant restreindre la portée de ce qui précède, renfermant de l'actinolite, de l'amosite, de l'anthophyllite, du chrysotile, du crocidolite, du cummingtonite ou du trémolite et qui sont destinés

a) au modelage ou à la sculpture, ou

b) à l'éducation ou à la récréation des enfants et qui sont conçus de telle sorte que de l'amiante peut se dégager du produit.

Il est proposé que la date d'entrée en vigueur soit celle de la proclamation. Après cette date, annoncer, vendre ou importer au Canada les produits susmentionnés constituerait une infraction.

L'amiante sert à la fabrication de pâtes à modeler. Des fibres aéroportées se dégagent au cours de deux étapes distinctes, soit le pétrissage de la pâte

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and from abrasion of the dried article, for example, filing or sanding. In one instance commercially available modelling clay was found to contain asbestos. Moreover, it came with instructions that the finished articles could be sanded, filed and drilled to achieve the desired shape. Asbestos dust could be released during such operations.

Also affected by the proposed schedule item are rubber items where the surface was dusted with talc used as a mold release agent. Such a surface is the interior of rubber balloons. Some talcs contain asbestos, particularly tremolite, as a naturally occurring impurity. Asbestos free brands of talc are available. Balloons manufactured in Canada so far submitted to the Product Safety Branch have been found to be made using an asbestos free talc. Steps should be taken to ensure the purity of talc used in the manufacture of balloons.

If you have a direct interest in these proposed items, I would appreciate receiving your views prior to January 20, 1976 . Communications should be directed to Dr. M. Brownstein of the Product Safety Branch.

modeler et l'abrasion du produit séché, par limage ou ponçage par exemple. Nous avons eu connaissance d'un cas où l'argile à modeler dans le commerce renfermait de l'amiante; en outre, le mode d'emploi stipulait que les articles achevés pouvaient être poncés, limés et creusés, pour obtenir la forme désirée. De tels procédés peuvent livérer de la poussière d'amiante.

L'article proposé vise aussi les objets de caoutchouc dont la surface a été saupoudrée de talc pour les sortir plus facilement du moule, comme l'intérieur d'un ballon de caoutchouc. Certains talcs renferment des impuretés naturelles d'amiante, surtout de la tremolite. Il existe des marques de talc sans amiante. Jusqu'à présent, la Direction de la sécurité des produits a constaté que les ballons, fabriqués au Canada, qui lui ont été soumis sont faits avec un talc sans amiante. Il faudra prendre les mesures pour s'assurer que le talc utilisé dans la fabrication des ballons est pur.

Si ces modifications à la loi vous concernent directement, je vous saurais gré de faire parvenir vos observations avant le 20 janvier 1976 , à Dr. M. Brownstein de la Sécurité des produits.

Directeur
Direction de la
sécurité des produits

J.W. Black
Director
Product Safety Branch

Recommended Action

Asbestos fiber is ubiquitous, appearing naturally in air and water from erosion of hydrated crystalline silicate minerals such as serpentine (rock). Asbestos also enters the environment through man's activities, general earth-disturbing construction activities, mining, milling, and fabrication of asbestos and asbestos-containing products; and the use and disposal of these products. Use and disposal of these industrial and consumer products will inevitably release asbestos into the environment, how much will depend on how firmly the fiber is "locked-in" by other constituents of the product, such as cements, binders, resins, plastics, etc.

BBS believes that exposure to consumer products containing freely available asbestiform fibers poses an unnecessary, unreasonable and completely avoidable potential risk to consumers that cannot be adequately controlled by warning labeling.

The fact that great numbers of reports of free asbestos in consumer products are not known to the Commission does not lessen the severity of exposure to such sources of free asbestos.

BBS believes the reports of free asbestos-containing products have been limited due to:

. Lack of label identification of free asbestos as a component of certain consumer products.

. Lack of immediate symptoms, or perception of injury, following consumer exposure to free asbestos-containing products.

. General lack of awareness of the hazards of non-occupational exposure to asbestos.

. Lack of chronic hazard data collection and identification systems.

Therefore, because of the long latency period (widely recognized as approximately 20 years) between exposure to asbestos and clinical recognition of asbestos-related diseases, including cancer, and due to the fact that the effects of asbestos inhalation are cumulative, BBS believes the Commission must act to prevent unnecessary exposure to free asbestos in consumer products from occurring. As an immediate course of action, BBS recommends that Section 1500.17(A)(7) of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act Regulations be amended to include a ban on free asbestos as a component in consumer products which is not bound or "locked-in' by other constituents of the product such as cements, binders, resins, or plastics, etc.