ASBESTOS

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: One firm in California accounted for 100% of domestic production. Asbestos was consumed in roofing products, 62%; gaskets, 22%; friction products, 12%; and other, 4%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001[e]
Production (sales), mine	7	6	7	5	5
Imports for consumption	21	16	16	15	13
Exports[1]	20	18	22	19	16
Shipments from Government stockpile excesses	—	3	5	—	—
Consumption, estimated	21	16	16	15	13
Price, average value, dollars per ton[2]	210	210	210	210	206
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill, number	25	25	25	25	20
Net import reliance[3] as a percentage of estimated consumption	100	100	100	100	100

Recycling: Insignificant.

Import Sources (1997-2000): Canada, 97%; and other, 3%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12/31/01
Asbestos	2524.00.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 22% (Domestic), 10% (Foreign).

Government Stockpile: None

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ASBESTOS

Events, Trends, and Issues: Domestic sales of asbestos remained unchanged from those of 2000. Imports and exports decreased by 13% and 16%, respectively, from those of 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Estimated consumption decreased by 13%. Some reported exports were likely to have been reexports, asbestos-containing products, or nonasbestos products. Exports of asbestos fiber were estimated to be approximately 5,000 tons. Essentially all the asbestos used in the United States was chrysotile. Canada remained the largest supplier of asbestos for domestic consumption.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves[4]	Reserve base[4]
	2000	2001[e]		
United States	5	5	Moderate	Large
Brazil	170	210	Moderate	Moderate
Canada	340	340	Large	Large
China	260	250	Large	Large
Kazakhstan	125	230	Large	Large
Russia	750	750	Large	Large
South Africa	19	19	Moderate	Moderate
Zimbabwe	110	115	Moderate	Moderate
Other countries	121	92	Large	Large
World total	1,900	1,870	Large	Large

World Resources: The world has 200 million tons of identified resources and an additional 45 million tons classified as hypothetical resources. The U.S. resources are large, but are composed mostly of short fibers.

Substitutes: Numerous materials substitute for asbestos in products. The substitutes include calcium silicate; carbon fiber; cellulose fiber; ceramic fiber; glass fiber; steel fiber; wollastonite; and several organic fibers, such as aramid, polyethylene, polypropylene, and polytetrafluoroethylene. Several nonfibrous minerals were considered to be possible asbestos substitutes for products in which the reinforcement properties of fibers were not required. No single substitute was as versatile and as cost effective as asbestos.

[e]Estimated. NA Not available. — Zero.

[1]Probably includes nonasbestos materials and reexports.

[2]Average price for Group 7 Canadian chrysotile, ex-mine.

[3]Defined as imports - exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes. Most domestic production is exported; imports account for almost all domestic consumption.

[4]See Appendix C for definitions.

U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Commodity Summaries, January 2002