ASBESTOS

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: There was no asbestos production in the United States in 2003. Asbestos was consumed in roofing products, 80%; gaskets, 8%; friction products, 4%; and other, 8%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003[e]
Production (sales), mine	7	5	5	3	—
Imports for consumption	16	15	13	7	6
Exports[1]	22	19	22	8	4
Shipments from Government stockpile excesses	5	—	—	—	—
Consumption, estimated	16	15	13	7	6
Price, average value, dollars per ton[2]	210	210	160	220	220
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill, number	20	19	15	15	—
Net import reliance[3] as a percentage of estimated consumption	100	100	100	100	100

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (1999-2002): Canada, 96%; and other, 4%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12/31/03
Asbestos	2524.00.0000	Free.

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

Government Stockpile: None.

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ASBESTOS

Events, Trends, and Issues: The asbestos industry continues to be affected by liability issues and public opposition to the use of asbestos. Debate in Congress is focusing on a proposed ban on the use of asbestos in the United States and a bill to limit the liability from asbestos litigation on companies in the United States.

Exports and imports declined to 4,000 tons and 6,000 tons, respectively. Estimated consumption declined to 6,000 tons from 7,000 tons in 2002. Some reported exports were likely to have been reexports, asbestos-containing products, or nonasbestos products. Any exports of domestically produced asbestos were from stocks owing to the closure of the last U.S. asbestos mine in 2002. 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]
	2002	2003[e]		
United States	3	—	Small	Large
Brazil	209	200	Moderate	Moderate
Canada	272	270	Large	Large
China	360	360	Large	Large
Kazakhstan	291	250	Large	Large
Russia	750	750	Large	Large
Zimbabwe	130	120	Moderate	Moderate
Other countries	120	110	Moderate	Large
World total (rounded)	2,130	2,060	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 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; however, imports account for essentially all domestic consumption.
[4]See Appendix C for definitions.

U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Commodity Summaries, January 2004