ASBESTOS

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: There was no asbestos production in the United States in 2004. Asbestos consumption in the United States was estimated to be 60% for roofing products, 25% for coatings and compounds, and 15% for other applications. The use of asbestos in roofing products declined significantly from 2003 because a major manufacturer stopped production of its asbestos-based products.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004[e]
Production (sales), mine	5	5	3	—	—
Imports for consumption	15	13	7	5	3
Exports[1]	19	22	7	3	([2])
Shipments from Government stockpile excesses	—	—	—	—	—
Consumption, estimated	15	13	7	5	3
Price, average value, dollars per ton[3]	210	160	220	220	255
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill, number	19	15	15	—	—
Net import reliance[4] as a percentage of estimated consumption	100	100	100	100	100

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2000-03): Canada, 98%; and other, 2%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-04
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 continues on proposed bans on the use of asbestos in the United States and bills to limit liability from asbestos litigation on companies in the United States.

Exports and imports declined to 850 tons and 2,880 tons, respectively. Consumption declined to an estimated 2,880 tons from 5,000 tons in 2003 as domestic manufacturers phased-out more asbestos-based products. Exports of asbestos were from stocks. All the asbestos used in the United States was chrysotile. Canada remained the leading supplier of asbestos for domestic consumption.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves[5]	Reserve base[5]
	2003	2004[e]		
United States	—	—	Small	Large
Brazil	195	200	Moderate	Moderate
Canada	241	250	Large	Large
China	260	350	Large	Large
Kazakhstan	353	360	Large	Large
Russia	878	900	Large	Large
Zimbabwe	130	130	Moderate	Moderate
Other countries	93	85	Moderate	Large
World total (rounded)	2,150	2,280	Large	Large

World Resources: The world has 200 million tons of identified resources. The U.S. resources are large, but are composed mostly of short-fiber asbestos, whose use is more limited than long-fiber asbestos in asbestos-based products.

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 or rocks, such as perlite, serpentine, silica, and talc, are 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]Less than ½ unit.
[3]Average price for Group 7 Canadian chrysotile, ex-mine.
[4]Defined as imports – exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes; however, imports account for essentially all domestic consumption.
[5]See Appendix C for definitions.

U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Commodity Summaries, January 2005