ASBESTOS

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: There has been no asbestos mining in the United States since 2002 so the United States is totally dependent on imports to meet manufacturing needs. Asbestos consumption in the United States was estimated to be 30% for roofing products, 30% for coatings and compounds, and 40% for other applications.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005[e]
Production (sales), mine	5	3	—	—	—
Imports for consumption	13	7	5	3	2
Exports[1]	22	7	3	2	1
Shipments from Government stockpile excesses	—	—	—	—	—
Consumption, estimated	13	7	5	3	2
Price, average value, dollars per ton[2]	210	160	220	255	255
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	—	—
Employment, mine and mill, number	15	15	2	—	—
Net import reliance[3] as a percentage of estimated consumption	100	100	100	100	100

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2001-04): Canada, 93%; and other, 7%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-05
Asbestos	2524.00.0000	Free.

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

Government Stockpile: None.

Prepared by **Robert L. Virta [(703) 648-7726, rvirta@usgs.gov, fax: (703) 648-7975]**

ASBESTOS

Events, Trends, and Issues: Domestic use of asbestos declined because the industry continues to be affected by liability issues and public opposition to the use of asbestos. Congressional activity during the year focused on establishing a trust fund from which to compensate workers suffering from asbestos-related health disease. The size and exact means of funding of trust continued to be debated. The Mine Safety and Health Administration continued to review its proposed reduction of the 8-hour time-weighted average permissible exposure level to 0.1 fiber per cubic centimeter from 2.0 fibers per cubic centimeter for asbestos.

Exports and imports declined to an estimated 690 tons and 2,400 tons, respectively. Consumption declined to an estimated 2,400 tons from 3,450 tons in 2004. 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[4]	Reserve base[4]
	2004	2005[e]		
United States	—	—	Small	Large
Brazil	195	195	Moderate	Moderate
Canada	200	240	Large	Large
China	355	360	Large	Large
Kazakhstan	347	350	Large	Large
Russia	875	875	Large	Large
Zimbabwe	150	100	Moderate	Moderate
Other countries	110	80	Moderate	Large
World total (rounded)	2,230	2,200	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]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 all domestic consumption.
[4]See Appendix C for definitions.

U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Commodity Summaries, January 2006