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 84% for roofing products and 16% for other applications.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007[e]
Production (sales), mine	—	—	—	—	—
Imports for consumption	5	3	3	2	2
Exports[1]	3	2	2	3	1
Shipments from Government stockpile excesses	—	—	—	—	—
Consumption, estimated	5	3	3	2	2
Price, average value, dollars per ton[2]	220	255	255	NA	NA
Stocks, producer, yearend	—	—	—	—	—
Employment, mine and mill, number	2	—	—	—	—
Net import reliance[3] as a percentage of estimated consumption	100	100	100	100	100

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2003-06): Canada, 86%; and other, 14%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-07
Asbestos other than crocidolite	2524.90.0000	Free.
Crocidolite	2524.10.0000	Free.

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

Government Stockpile: None.

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Published by AsbestosClaims.Law
asbestosclaims.law/library/10956/1

ASBESTOS

Events, Trends, and Issues: There was no production of asbestos in the United States. U.S. exports decreased to an estimated 1,089 tons in 2007 from 3,410 tons in 2006. Exports may include some nonasbestos materials and reexports, as U.S. production of asbestos ceased in 2002. Imports decreased to an estimated 1,820 tons in 2007 from 2,230 tons in 2006. Domestic use of asbestos declined to an estimated 1,820 tons in 2007 from 2,230 tons in 2006. All the asbestos used in the United States was chrysotile. Canada remained the leading supplier of asbestos for domestic consumption.

Health research and asbestos cleanup continued in Libby, MT, where vermiculite contaminated with asbestos was mined and processed, and at several vermiculite processing plants across the country. The health risk posed by asbestos exposure in populated areas, such as housing developments, hiking trails, and school settings, remained a contentious topic of discussion, particularly in El Dorado County, CA.

The Ministry of Labor in the Republic of Korea announced that it will restrict the manufacture, import, and use of asbestos in stages through 2008, and a ban will be in force by 2009. The Government of New Caledonia imposed a ban on asbestos. Exemptions to the ban are effective through the end of 2011.

The companies controlling the production of asbestos in Canada filed for bankruptcy under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act of Canada. The companies will examine several scenarios to maximize the value of their assets, including selling land and equipment or forming a new partnership.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves[4]	Reserve base[4]
	2006	2007[e]		
United States	—	—	Small	Large
Brazil	236	230	Moderate	Moderate
Canada	244	185	Large	Large
China	350	350	Large	Large
Kazakhstan	355	350	Large	Large
Russia	925	1,030	Large	Large
Zimbabwe	100	95	Moderate	Moderate
Other countries	90	45	Moderate	Large
World total (rounded)	2,300	2,290	Large	Large

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

Substitutes: Numerous materials substitute for asbestos in products. 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.

[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 2008