ASBESTOS

(Data in metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: Asbestos has not been mined in the United States since 2002. The United States is dependent on imports to meet manufacturing needs. Asbestos consumption in the United States was estimated to be 1,100 tons, based on asbestos imports through July 2011. Roofing products were estimated to account for about 60% of U.S. consumption; the chloralkali industry about 35%; and unknown applications, 5%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011[e]
Production (sales), mine	—	—	—	—	—
Imports for consumption	1,730	1,460	869	1,040	1,100
Exports[1]	815	368	59	171	60
Consumption, estimated	1,730	1,460	869	1,040	1,100
Price, average value, dollars per ton[2]	473	746	787	786	940
Net import reliance[3] as a percentage of estimated consumption	100	100	100	100	100

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2007–10): Canada, 92%; Zimbabwe, 6%, and other, 2%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-11
Crocidolite	2524.10.0000	Free.
Amosite	2524.90.0010	Free.
Chrysotile:		
Crudes	2524.90.0030	Free.
Milled fibers, group 3 grades	2524.90.0040	Free.
Milled fibers, group 4 and 5 grades	2524.90.0045	Free.
Other, chrysotile	2524.90.0055	Free.
Other	2524.90.0060	Free.

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

Government Stockpile: None.

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ASBESTOS

Events, Trends, and Issues: The use of asbestos in 2011 and the preceding 5 years is the lowest it has been in the United States since 1909. Most companies that used asbestos to manufacture products have switched to asbestos substitutes, manufacturing alternative products, or simply ceased production of products requiring asbestos. In 2011, U.S. apparent consumption increased by 6%. While this increase seems considerable, the actual tonnage increase was 60 tons and was unlikely to represent any resurgence in the asbestos industry. Based on current trends, U.S. asbestos consumption is likely to remain near the 1,000-ton level in the near future. All the asbestos used in the United States was chrysotile. In 2011, most asbestos was imported from Canada, with a small amount from Brazil. A minor amount of chrysotile was imported from South Africa but was most likely sourced from Zimbabwe.

World Mine Production and Reserves:

	Mine production		Reserves[4]
	2010	2011[e]	
United States	—	—	Small
Brazil	270,000	270,000	Moderate
Canada	100,000	100,000	Large
China	400,000	400,000	Large
Kazakhstan	214,000	210,000	Large
Russia	1,000,000	1,000,000	Large
Other countries	21,000	20,000	Moderate
World total (rounded)	2,010,000	2,000,000	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. — Zero.
[1]Probably includes nonasbestos materials and reexports.
[2]Average Customs value for U.S. chrysotile imports, all grades combined. Prices for individual commercial products are no longer published.
[3]Defined as imports – exports.
[4]See Appendix C for resource/reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.

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