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 1,060 tons, based on asbestos imports through July 2012. The chloralkali industry accounted for an estimated 57% of U.S. consumption; roofing products, about 41%; and unknown applications, 2%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012[e]
Production (sales), mine	—	—	—	—	—
Imports for consumption	1,460	869	1,040	1,180	1,060
Exports[1]	368	59	171	169	55
Consumption, estimated	1,460	869	1,040	1,180	1,060
Price, average value, dollars per ton[2]	746	787	786	931	1,790
Net import reliance[3] as a percentage of estimated consumption	100	100	100	100	100

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2008–11): Canada, 87%; Zimbabwe, 5%; and other, 8%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12–31–12
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.

Prepared by **Robert L. Virta [(703) 648–7726, rvirta@usgs.gov]**

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ASBESTOS

Events, Trends, and Issues: U.S. imports and consumption of asbestos declined 10% in 2012. All asbestos imported and used in the United States was chrysotile, solely sourced from Brazil. This is the first year in more than 100 years that chrysotile was not imported from Canada. There was no chrysotile produced in Canada in 2012 so domestic consumers sought other sources for their supply. The increase in the average value of all imported chrysotile was because only high-valued chrysotile was imported from Brazil; there were no imports of lower valued chrysotile from other countries in 2012. Based on current trends, U.S. asbestos consumption is likely to remain near the 1,000-ton level, as it has in the past 4 years.

World Mine Production and Reserves:

	Mine production		Reserves[4]
	2011	2012[e]	
United States	—	—	Small
Brazil	302,000	300,000	Moderate
Canada	50,000	—	Large
China	440,000	440,000	Large
Kazakhstan	223,000	240,000	Large
Russia	1,000,000	1,000,000	Large
Other countries	19,000	20,000	Moderate
World total (rounded)	2,030,000	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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