ASBESTOS: Silent Killer

Do you know that :

Asbestos is well recognized as a health hazard and is highly regulated. An estimated 1.3 million employees in the construction and general industry face significant asbestos exposure on the job. Heaviest exposures occur in the construction industry, particularly during the removal of asbestos during renovation or demolition. Employees are also likely to be exposed during the manufacture of asbestos products (such as textiles, friction products, insulation, and other building materials) and during automotive brake and clutch repair work.

At least 90,000 people die each year from asbestos-related lung cancer, mesothelioma and asbestosis resulting from occupational exposures. Burden of asbestos-related diseases still rising even in countries that have banned the use of asbestos in the early 1990s.

Because of the long latency periods - stopping the use of asbestos now will only result in a decrease in the number of asbestos-related deaths after a number of decades.

Asbestos in Roof

Asbestos Pipe Insulation

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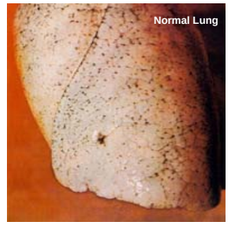

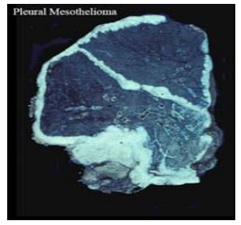

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is the name of a group of highly fibrous minerals with separable, long, and thin fibers. Separated asbestos fibers are strong enough and flexible enough to be spun and woven. Asbestos fibers are heat resistant, making them useful for many industrial purposes. Because of their durability, asbestos fibers that get into lung tissue will remain for long periods of time.

Asbestos exposure becomes a health concern when high concentrations of asbestos fibers are inhaled over a long period of time. Most fibers are expelled, but some can become lodged in the lungs and remain there throughout life. Fibers can accumulate and cause scarring and inflammation that can affect breathing, leading to disease.

How can children and adults be exposed?

Asbestos related diseases do not only affect those who have worked with asbestos, they also affect those who have been exposed to asbestos in the environment. This is because the dangerous dust was not simply confined to the workplace but also contaminated the environment through the actions of asbestos users and their employees.

Asbestos fibers may be released into the air by the disturbance of asbestos-containing material during product use, demolition work, building or home maintenance, repair, and remodeling. In general, exposure may occur only when the asbestos-containing material is disturbed in some way to release particles and fibers into the air.

People living near these industries may also be exposed to high levels of asbestos in air. Even family members of workers exposed to asbestos face an increased risk of developing mesothelioma and other asbestos–related diseases due to contact with asbestos dust brought into the home on the workers' shoes, clothing, skin, or hair. That risk has materialised in a number of cases and people have died as a result of asbestos related diseases caused by 'secondary exposure' of this type.

Asbestos Diseases is very unlikely to result from a single, high-level exposure, or from a short period of exposure to lower levels. Education and awareness as well as understanding the use of materials that have a potential public danger should always be our top priority.

For more information you can contact **NCALABS Phils., Inc.** located at Unit 5 and 6 Maga Centre San Antonio St. Paseo de Magallanes Makati City (Tel : 7294327/ 8548365)

NCALABS Phils. Inc., a part of TestAmerica environmental laboratory network, was conceptualized to serve the emerging awareness and concern of the country to the environment. As a foundation for critical environmental decisions, NCALABS Phils. Inc. provides data that are legally defensible and of internationally recognized quality.

ETS-Testconsult Ltd. (ETL) is NCALABS' partner and is one of the largest totally independent materials' testing companies in Hong Kong and Asia. ETL has more than 20 years of experience with asbestos surveys, field and laboratory services and asbestos management planning. ETL have completed more than 250 asbestos projects located in Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China, Korea, and the Philippines. ETL is HOKLAS (ISO 17025) accredited for their asbestos analysis services.

Over the years, NCALABS has extended its capabilities to asbestos surveys, field monitoring of airborne fibers, and bulk fiber identification using polarized light microscopy. NCALABS with ETL-Testconsult have done asbestos projects here in the Philippines. With this experience, NCALABS and ETL-Testconsult understand client's quality, health, safety and environmental requirements associated with asbestos investigations and management plans.

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