



Asbestos

Description

In the last century, thousands of products contained asbestos for heat resistance, strength and insulation. Pipe insulation, rope, caulk, tape, gaskets, cement, fireproofing and wallboard are examples of these products. It has been shown that overexposure to certain asbestos fibers can cause mesothelioma and certain other diseases.

As a result, hundreds of thousands of people have sued U.S. companies that made products containing asbestos. Many manufacturers of asbestos-containing products are bankrupt as a result of asbestos litigation.

Dow has never made an asbestos containing product. Union Carbide Corporation (UCC), which became a wholly owned subsidiary of Dow in 2001, formerly made products containing asbestos, and once mined a form of asbestos fiber for sale to customers who, in turn, incorporated UCC's fibers into their products. The mine was not a major fiber supplier, and was sold in 1985. Like most companies, Dow and UCC also used products containing asbestos in offices, labs and production facilities.

Dow's Position

Dow and UCC have always complied with the proper government regulations and industry standards concerning the use of asbestos products in their facilities, and in the case of UCC, in the use, production and sale of asbestos fiber and asbestos-containing products. The companies have always been diligent in providing warnings and safe handling information materials.

Since excessive exposure to certain kinds of asbestos fibers can cause specific diseases, people who suffer disability from those diseases as a result of overexposure to asbestos fibers deserve compensation. A national solution, such as legislation, is needed to provide fair compensation to victims as the courts cannot handle the volume of cases and have not been able to adequately distinguish those plaintiffs who have asbestos-related diseases from those who do not, and to clarify which, if any, solvent companies are responsible for those injuries. Uncertainty about future claims has driven many companies into bankruptcy which reinforces the need for a broad, national solution.

Dow's Actions

Dow, as an asbestos user, and UCC, as an asbestos producer and user, have defended and will continue to defend cases brought against them. At the same time, Dow and UCC support a legislative solution to this national problem. The companies support the FAIR Act, which will take the cases out of the time-consuming, duplicative legal system and create a way to provide fair, expedited and just payments to people truly suffering from asbestos-caused disease.