

# Towards the development of a sustainable National approach in dealing with asbestos containing materials

**Chemicals Management & Land Remediation Summit**  
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Chemicals and Waste Management



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The usual picture in townships



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# Introduction

- Commercial asbestos mining was conducted in South Africa over the past decades dating back to 1839 in the following provinces: Limpopo; Mpumalanga; North West and Northern Cape.
- Mining included all **three types** of commercial asbestos: Chrysotile (white), Crocidolite (blue) and Amosite (brown).
- The asbestos mining industry introduced dust controls in the fifties. The dust extracted from the workplace was sometimes deposited **via stacks onto neighbouring communities**. In the early sixties a South African scientist demonstrated that blue and brown asbestos were primarily responsible for mesothelioma.
- In 1996, the Environmental Portfolio Committee launched an investigation into asbestos as per the request of workers and affected communities. This resulted in the **National Asbestos Summit being held from 24 – 26 November 1998**.



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# Introduction Cont...

- The **Summit Declaration**, endorsed by labour, business and government, asked the South African Government to ban blue and brown asbestos with immediate effect and to eliminate the use of white asbestos as and when alternatives become available.
- In 1999 the South African Cabinet formally adopted the Declaration and asked the relevant Government Departments to submit plans to phase out white asbestos, taking into account the social and economic impacts.
- In 2001, strict new Asbestos Regulations were published by the Department of Labour. Asbestos mining stopped in South Africa and local manufacturers became totally dependent on Zimbabwe for fibres.



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# Introduction Cont...

- In 2001, the South African Government became a signatory to the United Nations Environmental Council agreement that asbestos is not used in automotive products.
- The South African Bureau of Standards implemented the necessary code for Original Automotive Equipment and introduced the code for replacement of automotive parts in September 2005.



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# Introduction Cont...

- In 2002, the major South African manufacturers of automotive friction products met their undertakings to the Asbestos Summit and replaced white asbestos with safer fibres.
- In 2002, the Department of Trade and Industry commissioned a NEDLAC study to investigate the socio-economic impacts of the phasing out of asbestos in South Africa. **The report concluded that the impact would be low but pointed to the “knock-on” effect on SADC countries** that exported raw asbestos and/or asbestos containing materials to South Africa.
- The SABS initiated an immediate ban on asbestos containing automotive products and the DEAT indicated that the necessary regulations would be formulated.
- In July 2005, **DEAT advised that the regulations have been completed in draft form and will be published for comment.** In November 2005, the draft regulations banning the import or export of asbestos or asbestos containing products were published for comment.



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# Introduction Cont...

- The Department of Environmental Affairs promulgated regulations for the prohibition of the use, manufacturing, import and export of asbestos and asbestos containing materials in 2008.
- The regulations are currently being amended to be in line with the Waste Act.



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# Is there alternatives?

- Asbestos substitute products such as corrugated metal roof sheeting; concrete roof tiles; pressed metal tiles; gypsum board; plastic products; ductile iron piping; metal piping and synthetic organic fibres are alternatives that can be used and regarded as harmless. Asbestos roof sheeting is regarded as generally not harmful because it is mixed with cement



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# Current practices

- What happens to the damaged roof sheets in the Townships? – dumped illegally, collected with general domestic waste to a landfill site.
- From other buildings at least they are collected and disposed of at licensed waste disposal facilities.
- Registration with the department of Labour as a contractor is crucial.
- Registration in other provinces and municipalities as a transporter of waste is important.



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# Can't this be done differently?

- I think it can be done differently, any suggestions?

## DISCUSSION



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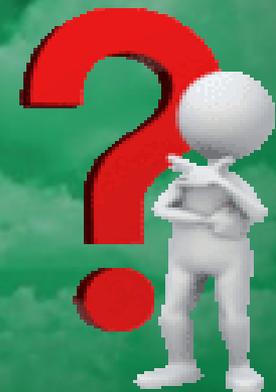
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