

## What is Asbestos?

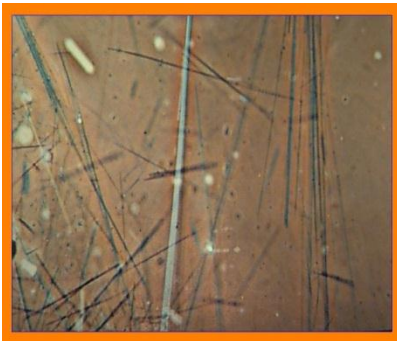
Asbestos is the name applied to six naturally occurring minerals that are mined from the earth. The different types of asbestos are:

- Amosite
- Chrysotile
- Tremolite
- Actinolite
- Anthophyllite
- Crocidolite

Of these six, three are used more commonly. **Chrysotile** (white) is the most common, but it is not unusual to encounter **Amosite** (brown / off-white), or **Crocidolite** (blue) as well.

Asbestos fibers are virtually indestructible. They are resistant to chemicals and heat, and they are very stable in the environment. They do not evaporate into air or dissolve in water, and they are not broken down over time. Because asbestos has so many useful properties, it has been used in over 3,000 different products.

Usually asbestos is mixed with other materials to form the products. Floor tiles, for example, may contain only a small percentage of asbestos. Depending on what the product is, the amount of asbestos in asbestos containing materials (ACM) varies. Federal and State Agencies have established Permissible Exposure Limits (PEL) for asbestos fibers. Materials containing asbestos have special handling and disposal procedures.



Microscopic view of asbestos fibers



Asbestos in mineral form