



**GOLDENBERG HELLER
ANTOGNOLI & ROWLAND, P.C.**
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Asbestos

Goldenberg Heller Antognoli & Rowland, P.C. is one of the premier Asbestos Litigation firms in the United States. We are a team of uniquely talented individuals whose depth of character, innovative thinking and more than 25 years of experience in handling asbestos claims have produced extraordinary results in excess of half a billion dollars for our asbestos clients through litigation, settlement and trial. Our firm is the most experienced asbestos litigation firm in the St. Louis area.

Goldenberg Heller Antognoli & Rowland, P.C. offers the resources and heritage of a large firm and the character and compassion of a small one, allowing for thoughtful, personal service that delivers the exceptional results each client deserves.

Asbestos is a mineral that was widely used in many mainstream industries. The largest risk of asbestos-related disease occurs when asbestos fibers are released into the air and inhaled, or ingested. The major asbestos-related diseases include Mesothelioma, Asbestosis and lung cancer.

Successful treatment, like most diseases, lies in early detection. The most common treatments for asbestos-related illnesses are surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy. In addition, some experimental treatments are becoming more widely used. The most popular experimental treatments are photodynamic therapy, gene therapy and immunotherapy. However, all of these treatments only provide relief, not a cure.

Our Asbestos Litigation attorneys:

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What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a silent killing mineral that is used throughout many mainstream commercial industries. There are four main types of asbestos: Chrysotile, Amosite, Crocidolite and Anthophyllite. Its popularity grew because asbestos fibers are not affected by heat or chemicals and they do not conduct electricity. The fiber masses have a tendency to break easily into a dust of tiny particles that can float in the air or stick to clothes, allowing them to easily be inhaled or swallowed.

What Does Asbestos Do?

If inhaled, asbestos fibers settle in the air passageway and the lungs. While most of these fibers are removed by coughing within a few hours of entry into the body, some make their way into the deepest layer of the lung. In that part of the lung, these fibers can remain for many years, or permanently. This is the cause for the majority of asbestos-related illnesses: pneumonia, lung cancer, asbestosis and Mesothelioma.

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In the rare occasion that fibers are able to make their way all the way down the stomach and intestines, the patient may suffer from nausea and stomach pain. Rare cases can lead to stomach viruses or stomach cancer. Even fewer of these fibers enter in the blood system, although they are often entirely removed in urine and do not cause many health concerns. If asbestos comes in contact with the skin, there is a low risk that any will pass through the body.

How is Asbestos Used and Who is at Risk?

Asbestos has been mined and used commercially in North America since 1880, but its use increased greatly during World War II. Asbestos was used in many industries throughout the past four decades. For example, the building and construction industry used asbestos for strengthening cement and plastics as well as for heat insulation, fireproofing and sound absorption. The shipbuilding industry has used asbestos to insulate boilers, steam pipes, hot water pipes and nuclear reactors in ships. Because of its good friction and wear characteristics, asbestos is a component of the brake shoes and clutch pads of cars and trucks. It is estimated that patents have been issued for more than 5,000 different asbestos-containing products.

The following list includes some of the products that now contain or have contained asbestos:

- Pipe Insulation
- Block Insulation
- Refractory Cements
- Insulation Cement Sheets
- Millboard Plaster Cement
- Pipe Roofing Products
- Floor Tile
- Gaskets Packing Caulk
- Asbestos Cloth
- Heat Resistant Clothing

Those at the highest risk are people who work or have worked in:

- Ship Building Trades
- Asbestos Mining and Manufacturing
- Refineries
- Foundries
- Automotive Break Repair
- Construction including Insulation and demolition work, drywall removers, other building trades

For more complete lists please contact us.

It is also possible for family members of people in the above trades to contract asbestos-related diseases by coming in contact with clothing or equipment that has been exposed to asbestos on the worksite. Even those who work or have worked near contaminated areas have developed asbestosis, Mesothelioma and other asbestos-related illnesses.

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What are the Health Hazards of Exposure to Asbestos?

Those exposed to asbestos often show the following symptoms:

- Shortness of breath
- Chronic and persistent cough with a presence of blood
- Nausea
- Pain in the chest or abdomen
- Difficulty swallowing or prolonged hoarseness
- Unexplained weight loss
- Swelling of the face or neck
- Sudden fever and night sweats

These symptoms could develop into the following:

- **Mesothelioma** (Lung Cancer) – a relatively rare cancer of the thin membrane lining of the chest and abdomen. In the early stages of Mesothelioma, the cancer is found in the lining of the chest cavity near the lung and heart or in the diaphragm or the lung. In the advanced stages, Mesothelioma spreads beyond the lining of the chest to lymph nodes. Mesothelioma may continue to spread into the chest wall, center of the chest, heart, through the diaphragm, or abdominal lining.
- **Asbestosis** – a chronic lung ailment that can produce shortness of breath, permanent lung damage and increased risk of dangerous lung infections
- **Pneumonia**
- **Death**

Many of the above symptoms could take from 5-30 years to develop. Asbestosis and Mesothelioma may take up to 45 years to develop after the initial exposure.

How great is the risk?

Not everyone exposed to asbestos will develop a disease or suffer any ill effects related to their contact with the mineral. Asbestos bonded in finished products is not a risk to health, as long as the product is not damaged or disturbed in such a way that fibers are released into the air, for example, sawing, drilling, cutting, etc. Since the fibers are nearly indestructible, a risk exists if they are set free. Once the asbestos particles work their way into the body tissues, they tend to stay there indefinitely.

Who needs to be examined?

Individuals who have been exposed, or suspect they have been exposed, to asbestos dust on the job, or at home through a family member, should inform their physician of their work history and any symptoms. A thorough physical examination, including a chest x-ray and lung function tests, may be recommended. Interpretation of the chest x-ray may require the help of a specialist who is experienced in reading x-rays for asbestos-related diseases. Other tests also may be necessary. The symptoms of asbestos-related diseases may not become apparent for many decades after exposure. If any of the above symptoms develop, a physical examination should be scheduled without delay.



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Individuals Exposed to Asbestos Should:

- **Stop Smoking.** Many studies have shown that the combination of smoking and asbestos exposure is particularly hazardous. While asbestos exposure itself can increase the risk of developing lung cancer, asbestos and cigarette smoking together may increase the risk of lung cancer. Smokers who are also heavily exposed to asbestos have been shown to be up to 90 times more likely to develop lung cancer than non exposed individuals who do not smoke.
- **Get regular health checkups.** Successful treatment, like most diseases, lies in early detection.
- **Get prompt medical attention for any respiratory illness.**
- **Take preventative measures when working around asbestos.** Be sure to use all protective equipment and follow all safe work practices and procedures.

If you or a loved one has been exposed to asbestos, please contact us to discuss your potential case.

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