

EPA Releases Guidance to Reduce Mechanics' Exposure to Asbestos
Press Release date: 08/23/2006

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<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/a8f952395381d3968525701c005e65b5/ed6c01547da8e2b4852571d3004d63a0!OpenDocument>

The Environmental Protection Agency is updating its guidance to protect the health of auto mechanics with the release of a draft brochure entitled, Current Best Practices for Preventing Asbestos Exposure Among Brake and Clutch Repair Workers. The brochure contains information for both automotive professionals and home mechanics. EPA is providing the public 60 days to comment on the brochure.

The brochure includes work practices that may be used to avoid asbestos exposure. It also summarizes existing Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulatory requirements for professional automotive mechanics. When finalized, the brochure will supersede the existing Guidance for Preventing Asbestos Disease Among Auto Mechanics, known as the "Gold Book."

Asbestos is the common name given to a number of naturally occurring mineral fibers that have been used in manufactured goods due to their high tensile strength, resistance to heat, and chemical stability. Because of these properties, asbestos fibers have been used in a number of products, including automobile clutch and brake parts.

Exposure to asbestos is potentially harmful to human health if microscopic asbestos fibers, released into the air when asbestos is disturbed or in poor condition, are inhaled into the lungs. Asbestos exposure has been associated with a number of serious health problems and diseases, including asbestosis, lung cancer, and mesothelioma.

EPA welcomes all suggestions for improving the draft brochure and will, where appropriate, incorporate changes to the final brochure. EPA will announce the availability of the final brochure through a future Federal Register notice.