

# Asbestos

This information about asbestos was first published to American Institute of Inspectors® members in 1992.

## MD Report Says Asbestos Should Be Managed.

Source: Sacramento Union  
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Union News Service

The American Medical Association (AMA) is taking a strong stand on asbestos in the nation's homes, schools and office buildings. In an article published in this week's Journal the AMA stated that:

**"It would be wiser for American society to us its resources to learn to live with asbestos safely than to try to remove it."**

Noting the vast amounts of money and energy that have been spent on unwarranted asbestos removals, the AMA makes strong recommendations about managing the material in place - (known to the industry as MIP for Managing In Place....*Editor*).

Generally following conclusions drawn in a Harvard University symposium report on the - "Health Aspects of Exposure to Asbestos in Buildings," - and an article in Science Magazine entitled - "Asbestos: Scientific Developments and Implications for Public Policy" - the AMA report is the third major scientific analysis to express concerns about public health policies and misconceptions surrounding the risk of asbestos in buildings. All three articles have stressed the value of in-place management of asbestos and the mis-allocation of societal resources on unwarranted asbestos removals.

*"The AMA is doing a great public service with the release of this article,"* said John Welch, president, Safe Buildings Alliance. *"Buy advocating the safe management of asbestos, the AMA will help building owners, policy makers, and the general public better understand that removal, like major surgery, should be a last resort remedy."*

The report, from the AMA's Council on Scientific Affairs, also encourages the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to continue its own efforts to clarify the federal guidance on the safe management

of asbestos in place. The Council concludes that, to date, unclear recommendations for handling asbestos in buildings have led to a rash of unnecessary removals with a staggering price tag. The report notes that approximately \$3.4 billion may be spent to clean up 107,000 primary and secondary schools alone; and, costs could soar to \$150 billion for public commercial buildings.

Physicians are also urged to help clarify misinformation about the potential risks of asbestos. Citing "misconceptions.... and mismatches between scientific fact and the need for action," the report directs physicians to advise the public that improper diet, inadequate exercise, smoking and alcohol and drug abuse are far greater causes of sickness and death than asbestos in buildings and homes.

*"This report should put asbestos fears to rest for a long time,"* said Mr. Welch. *"When the family doctor's prescription regarding asbestos is 'don't worry, manage it safely in place,' you listen."*

The Safe Buildings Alliance is an association of leading building products companies that formerly manufactured asbestos-containing materials (ACM) for building construction. The Alliance is based in Washington, D.C.

*Emphasis added by Editor*

**ALARMISTS who have been provoking fear of asbestos as a way of making money at the expense of reason have finally been stopped.**

**By far, the most commonly published recommendation is to simply "encase material" suspected of containing asbestos.**

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Chairman of A.I.I.™  
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**Unmilled Mineral Asbestos**

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