



## Vancouver Island BUILDING TRADES

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### **Island's Building Trades Calls to establish the last week of April as Asbestos Awareness week**

The Vancouver Island's Building Trades Council is calling on all levels of government to help establish a national building registry of all public buildings with products containing asbestos. Asbestos is a natural mineral which retards the spread of fire throughout a building, and has been used in drywall, insulation, lathe and plaster, ceiling and floor tiles, roofing, siding, piping and electrical wiring, fire retardant doors and more. If the product is disturbed and becomes airborne it can be breathed in and eventually will cause lung cancer.

Beyond the Building Registry the Island's Council representing 7,000 unionized construction trades men and women are calling for a national Awareness Campaign declaring the last week of April as "Asbestos Awareness" week. *"With many baby boomers leaving the industry to retire new trades jobs will be filled with young kids who have had no training or education to identify this fatal dust, creating a new generation of unsuspecting victims."* says Phil Venoit the Construction Council's President.

Although the last asbestos mine in Canada shut down its operations in 2011 products containing asbestos are still being manufactured in third world countries and being shipped back into Canada unregulated. *"Our federal government has been trotting around the globe negotiating almost forty trade deals with countries like India who manufacture a tremendous amount of goods with asbestos; we should all be at the very least, leery in purchasing products made outside of North America,"* said Venoit.

Some products still using asbestos fibres are; some cigarette filters, car and truck after-market gaskets and brakes, vinyl wall paper and flooring, fire retardant doors, roof felt and coatings, are a few examples. *"There are no excuses to continue manufacturing with asbestos as there are many suitable alternatives,"* say s Venoit.

Mesothelioma, the lung cancer caused by Asbestos kills over 2,500 Americans per year and in Canada about 250 people die every year from this entirely preventable disease. Among the most famous victims of this disease was Hollywood actor Steve McQueen who died at age 50. He believes he contracted it while cleaning out ship hulls as punishment during his service in the military.

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