

Asbestos and the U.S. Navy



U.S. Navy Heroes at Risk

Men and women, from every neighborhood in the U.S., proudly served and protected our freedom at home and on ships around the world. They made many sacrifices for this country. But it turns out that those sacrifices were even bigger than many thought.

A large number of U.S. Navy servicemen and women worked in and around asbestos without even knowing. This is because many manufacturers used asbestos in products used in construction of U.S. Navy vessels and military bases — even though they knew the terrible risks to America's sons and daughters.

1/3 of those diagnosed with **mesothelioma** have been shown to involve **military or shipyard exposures.** ⁽¹⁾

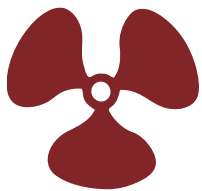


And, it wasn't just one group of men and women in the Navy that were affected by asbestos-containing products on the job. Unfortunately, there were several types of jobs, as well as locations, that were at higher risk for asbestos exposure.

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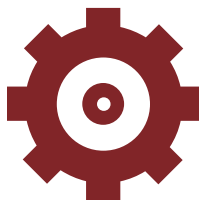


Some Rates at Risk of Exposure



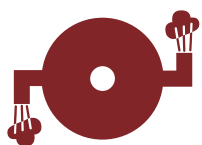
Machinist's Mate

MMs operate and maintain steam turbines and reduction gears used for ship propulsion and auxiliary machinery such as turbogenerators, pumps and oil purifiers, elevators, refrigeration plants, air conditioning systems and desalinization plants.



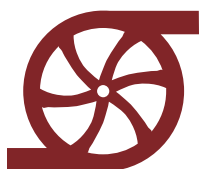
Boiler Technician

BTs maintain and repair all mechanisms related to the steam propulsion systems including testing inventories and supplies of water and fuel, whether the engines are powered from electricity, gas or nuclear.



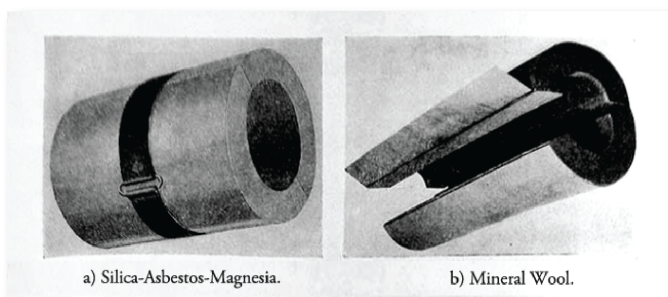
Engineman

Enginemen operate, service and repair internal combustion engines used to power U.S. Navy ships. Enginemen also maintain refrigeration and air conditioning systems, desalinization plants and small auxiliary boilers.



Gas Turbine System Technician

GSs operate and maintain gas turbine engines, main propulsion machinery and control systems including gears, shafting, controllable pitch propellers, auxiliary equipment, and electronic circuitry.



Images from the U.S. Navy Engineering Materials handbook (1954) showing asbestos pipe insulation, referred to as "mineral wool". (2)

There is **no safe level** of asbestos exposure.

30  / DAY

On average, there are 30 asbestos-related deaths a day in the U.S. (3)

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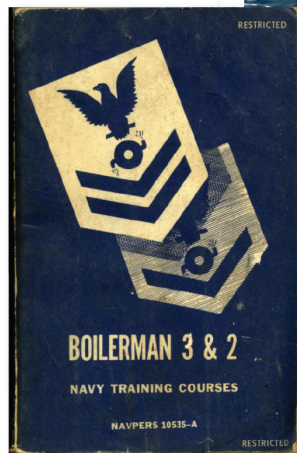
U.S. Navy Veterans Have the Highest Incidence of Asbestos-Related Disease ⁽⁴⁾



Stoking the furnaces with coal on the USS George Washington. (5)

Asbestos use in the U.S. military continued well into the 1970s, when the government finally issued warnings about asbestos.

Because mesothelioma symptoms can take 20-50 years to appear, some individuals who served in the 1960s and 1970s are only now being diagnosed with the disease. (6)



Personnel who may have been exposed:

- Those involved with renovations or asbestos removal
- U.S. Navy vets who served on ships whose keels were laid before 1983
- Vets who worked in shipyards from the 1930s through the 1990s
- Personnel who worked below deck before the 1990s
- Pipefitters, welders, boiler operators who worked before the 1990s



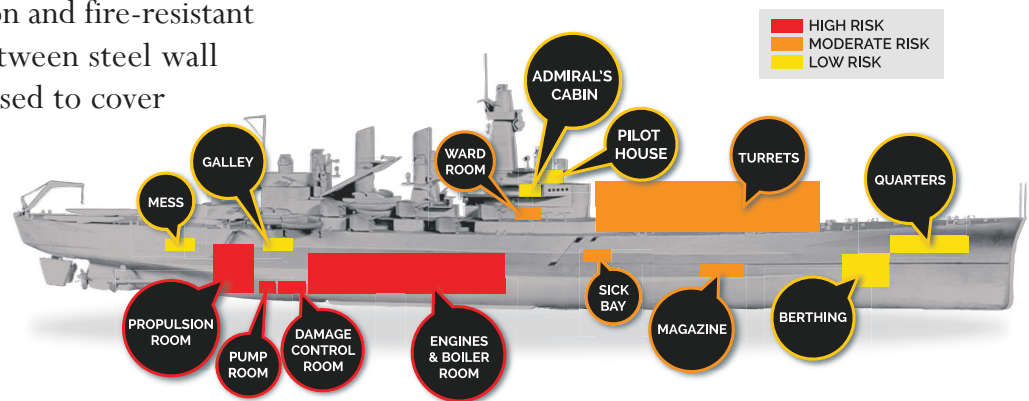
The USS Enterprise has an on-board team of 8 to 10 people that isolate and remove asbestos whenever it is found on the ship. (7)

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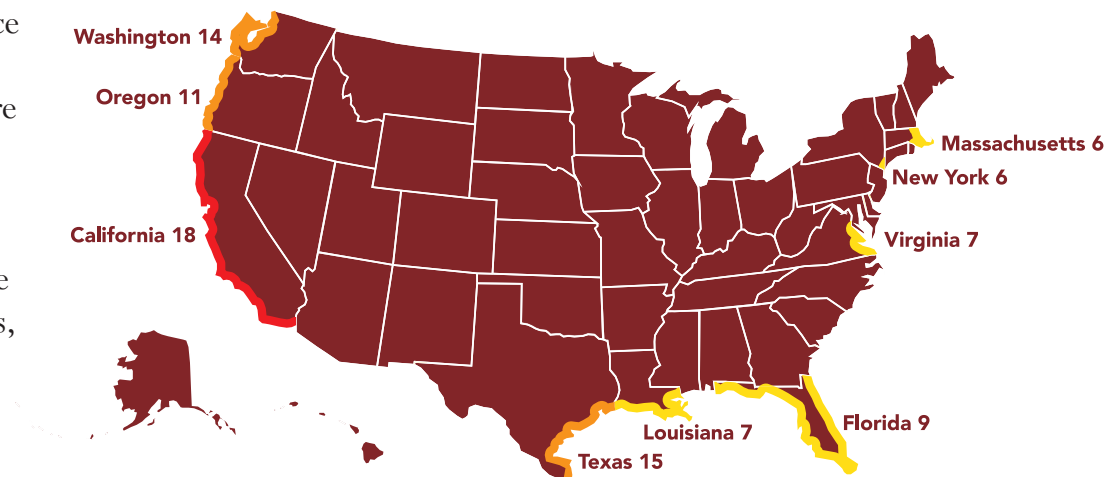
Areas with Asbestos on U.S. Navy Ships

Asbestos was used, particularly in engine rooms, because of its thermal insulation and fire-resistant properties. It was installed between steel wall plates and doors. It was also used to cover boilers, turbines and pumps, gaskets, lagging and rope. When extracted, it breaks into fine fibers, which can be inhaled. (8)



U.S. Shipyards – Hot-Zones by State

Shipbuilders, maintenance workers and those who decommissioned ships were also at risk of exposure, including the families of those workers. Asbestos fibers are brought into the home on workers' clothes, shoes and hair. This map shows the number of shipyards per state. (9)



If you or a family member served in the U.S. Navy during the past few decades and have experienced symptoms such as breathlessness, a persistent cough, and fatigue, see your doctor immediately to be checked for mesothelioma. Make sure to tell your doctor about your exposure to asbestos.

SOURCES:

1. http://www.curemeso.org/site/c.kkLUJ7MPKtH/b.4124605/k.9BD1/Progress_Report.htm
2. <http://asbestosbooks.com/engineering-materials.html>
3. Congressional Record, Senate, Vol. 151, Part 2. February 8, 2005
4. <http://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/WARRELATEDILLNESS/nj/education/factsheets/asbestos-exposure.pdf>
5. <http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/sh-usn/usnsh-g/id3018q2.htm>
6. <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/MalignantMesothelioma/DetailedGuide/malignant-mesothelioma-risk-factors>
7. http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/Documents/safety-gouge/SafetyGouge7_Apr2012.pdf
8. <http://www.shipbreakingplatform.org/problems-and-solutions/why-ships-are-toxic/7b>
9. <http://www.worldmaritime.net/usa-shipyards-list.shtml>

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