



**Date:** August 12, 2003

**To:** Regulated asbestos industry and other interested parties

**From:** Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Asbestos Program  
651-296-6300

Minnesota Department of Health  
Asbestos/Lead Compliance Program  
651-215-0900

**Subject:** Updated information on Vermiculite, Floor Tile, Transite Air Ducts and Mold

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### **VERMICULITE**

Attached is a news release from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), dated May 21, 2003, calling attention to their national consumer awareness campaign on vermiculite insulation. This news announcement and related fact sheets can be accessed through the internet at <http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/index.html>. Of particular importance in the information released is the recommendation to identify vermiculite by visual observation only and assume it is asbestos containing. As stated in the news release,

“Due to scientific uncertainties associated with existing testing techniques, there is no easy way or dependable testing method to differentiate between vermiculite insulation that might have some asbestos fibers and vermiculite that does not. ... Therefore, it is best to assume that the material may contain asbestos and take the appropriate precautions.”

MDH and MPCA **strongly recommend assuming** vermiculite contains asbestos. There is no dependable way of determining the asbestos content of vermiculite. MDH and MPCA have determined that removal of vermiculite insulation assumed to be asbestos containing falls under all applicable state and federal requirements.

In the event sampling of vermiculite occurs, the MPCA will be presenting information and developing a fact sheet related to proper sampling of vermiculite later this Fall. In the meantime, either assume vermiculite contains asbestos or for specific questions or guidance about vermiculite sampling procedures contact MPCA at 651-296-6300.

### **FLOOR TILE**

During the summer of 2002, MDH and MPCA issued a joint statement on the question of when floor tile is considered friable. This statement generated considerable discussion in the regulated community. In an attempt to address the concerns of the regulated community, MDH and MPCA have developed the attached joint Floor Tile Emergency Notification Procedure. MDH has also developed a new Floor Tile home page that includes the joint statement, an administrative law judge's decision on a recent enforcement action concerning floor tile, new photographs and the new notification procedure. These items are available on the MDH website at: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/asbestos/floortile/index.htm>

### **TRANSITE AIR DUCTS**

Please also be advised, that Transite air ducts underneath buildings must be inspected for during the thorough inspection that occurs as part of the pre-demolition asbestos building survey. The Transite air ducts must be identified on the initial survey, even if the air ducts are not accessible for abatement prior to demolition. However, after demolition of the materials that is required to gain access to the Transite, the appropriate abatement must occur. The removal of the Transite ducts must be conducted by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor unless the ducts can be removed with little or no breakage.

### **UPCOMING MOLD WORKSHOP**

The Indoor Air Quality Program of MDH would like to promote the upcoming Mold and Mold Remediation Course scheduled for October. The course is facilitated by the University of Minnesota's Center for Public Health and Outreach College of Continuing Education. More information can be found at [www.cpheo.umn.edu/mold/](http://www.cpheo.umn.edu/mold/)