

STEPS TO MINIMIZE ASBESTOS EXPOSURE AT THE BEACH

1. *Avoid Eating, Drinking and Smoking While on the Beach!*

Asbestos fibers can contaminate your hands, food, and containers. Eat in picnic areas away from the beach. According to the USEPA, cigarette smoking greatly increases the likelihood of a person developing lung cancer as the result of asbestos exposure.

2. *Avoid Touching Rocks on the Beach!*

Many pieces of asbestos have been tumbling along the shoreline for years. These worn asbestos pieces have the visual appearance of shoreline rocks but contain asbestos fibers. The Park has placed signs on the beach that warn the public to avoid handling asbestos and to contact the park office if asbestos is discovered. The USEPA has the following recommendation for homeowners who may have found similar asbestos materials at their homes: “Don't touch it, but look for signs of wear or damage such as tears, abrasions, or water damage. Damaged material may release asbestos fibers. This is particularly true if you often disturb it by hitting, rubbing, or handling it, or if it is exposed to extreme vibration or air flow.”

3. *Avoid Disturbing the Sand!*

Microscopic asbestos can be released from the sand when agitated. Disturbing the sand can cause asbestos to become airborne. According to the USEPA, “Sometimes the best way to deal with slightly damaged material is to

limit access to the area and not touch or disturb it.” The Illinois Department of Public Health states “... removal of sand and other materials by the public should be prohibited.”

4. *Shower Off and Clean Belongings Prior to Leaving the Beach!*

The asbestos fibers can be found wherever beach sand can go. Wash your whole body including hair, ears, and under fingernails. Pets should also be washed down prior to leaving the beach.

5. *Carefully Clean or Isolate Clothing, Shoes, Blankets, Towels, Coolers and Other Items Used at the Beach!*

“Don't track material that could contain asbestos through the house.” (USEPA) Take care when shaking out towels and blankets that may have come into contact with sand. Remove all beach clothing prior to entering your car or home. Launder beach clothing, blankets, and towels separately. Store shoes and other hard to clean items outside of the home.

6. *Avoid Certain Cleaning Methods!*

Do not dust, sweep, or vacuum debris that may contain asbestos. According to the USEPA, “These steps will disturb tiny asbestos fibers and may release them into the air.” The use of High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtered vacuums is recommended for cleaning up dust and fibers. Asbestos fibers can penetrate the filter of a regular vacuum cleaner causing the fibers to become airborne.

WHY IS ASBESTOS ON A PUBLIC BEACH?

Illinois Beach State Park has a long history of asbestos contamination. There is a federal asbestos Superfund clean-up site on the Johns-Manville property adjacent to the south end of the park's Nature Preserve. This Superfund site contains one million tons of asbestos waste. A discharge pipe from this Superfund site empties into Lake Michigan and periodically spews as much as 22 million microscopic asbestos fibers per liter of water into Lake Michigan, some of which washes up on the park's beaches. (Documented by the USEPA in May, 2002.) The Johns-Manville lagoon system leaks asbestos and other contaminants into the Nature Preserve where it flows into the Dead River which empties into the federal and state navigable waters of Lake Michigan. The Greenwood Avenue fishing pier has been closed for over a year due to extensive asbestos contamination.

Old homes at the northern end of the park were demolished and some of the debris was buried. Erosion of the shoreline and the lake bottom, along with the construction of the North Point Marina, have now exposed this debris which may include ACM (asbestos-containing materials) and washes onto the beach.

Authorized by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the IEPA, dredging operations offshore of Midwest Generation (ComEd) and adjacent to Johns-Manville have transported this contaminated, dredged material by barge or truck north to the park and have deposited it on the park's beaches for beach "nourishment" to offset erosion. The Army Corps of Engineers has also dumped dredged material contaminated with asbestos (and other contaminants) which was taken from the Waukegan Harbor approach channel and deposited on the Park's beaches. The original source for most of the asbestos contamination (microscopic and pieces) appears to be from the Johns-Manville Superfund site.

Visible asbestos continues to appear on the public beaches even though several tons of asbestos have been removed over the last 6 years. The Illinois Department of Public Health stated on August 1, 2003, "*Occasional handling of ACM may occur by children collecting shells, rocks and other materials along the beaches or by adults who remove sand for gardening or construction purposes.*"

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources' asbestos consultant describes the asbestos found on the beach as "commonly discovered during weekly surveys." (Report dated 7/12/04.) More recently, "friable" (damaged pieces where fibers can easily become airborne) asbestos was discovered. (Report dated 8/17/04.) No efforts have been made during this time to clean up the cancer and disease-causing microscopic asbestos on the beach.

The inside of this pamphlet contains practical actions families can take to minimize asbestos exposure while at the beach. Other recommendations provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois EPA, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Illinois Department of Public Health will help families learn how to protect themselves and prevent potential microscopic asbestos contamination from affecting their families, pets, vehicles, and homes.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING ASBESTOS CONTAMINATION AT ILLINOIS BEACH STATE PARK

A safe level of asbestos exposure has yet to be established by the government. However, it is impossible to avoid breathing any asbestos fibers. The Illinois Department of Public Health made the following statement regarding visible asbestos found by the public at Illinois Beach State Park on August 1, 2003:

"To reduce exposure to the public, warning signs about the possible presence of ACM (asbestos-containing material) should be clearly posted, children should be actively discouraged from collecting ACM from beaches, and removal of sand and other materials by the public should be prohibited."

As a precaution, we are recommending the commonsense approaches on the inside for minimizing exposure to you and your family from asbestos contamination while at the beaches of Illinois Beach State Park.

Provided as a Public Service by Illinois Dunesland Preservation Society

The society is a not-for-profit environmental organization that helped found the park over fifty years ago. It was the first nature preserve in the United States. Our goal is to preserve the environment at the state park and the surrounding areas. The society also helped found the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission.

For volunteer and membership information or to make a donation, please contact:

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Phone Number: 312 332-3377 FAX Number: 312 332-3379

Asbestos References

USEPA: <http://www.epa.gov/opt/asbestos/ashome.html>

CDC: http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/asbestos/asbestos_effects.html