
Measures to make Thai society free from asbestos

The Third National Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on Measures to make Thai society free from asbestos¹,
Aware that all types of asbestos are carcinogens affecting the health of workers in the asbestos-using establishments as well as the general public and that 57 countries throughout the world have already banned its use;

Concerned about the amount of asbestos being used in a large number of products and continually imported into the country based on the 1996 statistics according to which Thailand had a second highest rate of asbestos-consumption in the world;

Noting that the policy and related legal measures are not up to date and inefficient, that there are no direct or indirect provisions that deal with the control on the spreading of asbestos into the environment, and that currently there are safer substances that can be used as alternatives;

Worried that without measures to stop the use of asbestos in the country the risk of serious illnesses occurring will be greater, leading to enormous loss of human resources as well as economic, social and environmental losses;

Aware that to make Thai society free from asbestos will need an integrative management approach, including awareness-raising campaigns, promotion and support of the manufacture and use of asbestos-free products, surveillance of vulnerable groups, as well as development of strict legal measures and serious law enforcement, thus making it possible to permanently stop the use of asbestos;

Appreciative of the work of consumer organization networks and other agencies concerned in jointly making measures to make Thai society free from asbestos a public policy for health;

Viewing that all sectors concerned with asbestos have an important duty to advocate “Measures to make Thai society free from asbestos” and that these are the educational sector, law compliance and law enforcement agencies, agencies looking after healthcare insurance, the business and industry sectors, mass media, the people sector, and civil society;

Hereby issues the following resolutions:

1. Adopting the strategy “measures to make Thai society free from asbestos” as presented in the Annex following the Resolution².

2. Requesting the National Health Commission Office to submit the strategy “measures to make Thai society free from asbestos” to the cabinet for approval and for further work assignment to the agencies concerned to implement the strategy and consider taking speedy actions as follows :

2.1 Requesting the Ministry of Industry to take the following actions:

2.1.1 Control the use of asbestos as raw material (chrysotile) as hazardous substance Type 4 urgently within 2011, thus banning its production, importation, exportation, or possession.

¹ NHA3/Main 5

² NHA3/Main 5/Annex 1

2.1.2 Set an industrial product standard for goods that use alternatives to asbestos.

2.2 Requesting the Ministry of Public Health to:

2.2.1 Act as the main agency responsible for taking actions and coordinating with other agencies concerned such as the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, education institutes, and other organizations concerned for the implementation of the strategy “measures to make Thai society free from asbestos”.

2.2.2 Serve as the central body working with other agencies concerned to develop measures to control the dismantling, repair and extension of buildings with asbestos-containing material, as well setting measures for the disposal of asbestos waste, especially in the construction and installation service businesses.

2.3 Requesting the Ministry of Commerce to take actions forbidding the importation of asbestos-containing products.

2.4 Requesting the Office of the Consumer Protection Board to:

2.4.1 Inspect asbestos-containing products, inform the public about them and take actions to ban the sale of such products.

2.4.2 Consider issuing rules, regulations or laws governing asbestos-containing goods, especially high-risk goods.

2.5 Requesting the Ministry of Finance to consider increasing the import tariff for imported asbestos and reduce the import tariff for alternative substances, bearing in mind that this is a special condition and will not affect the tariffs imposed on other substances under the same code.

2.6 Requesting the Prime Minister’s Office to add criteria in the existing regulation on the construction of government buildings, specifying that no asbestos-containing material will be used in the construction, extension or repair of new buildings.

All the agencies concerned in 2.1.2-2.6 shall have their assignments completed within two years (by the end of 2012).

3. Requesting the Secretary-General of the National Health Commission to present a progress report on this matter to the 4th and 5th National Health Assembly.