

Asbestos in Arizona

Arizona's asbestos industry dates back to 1872 when the mineral was first discovered in the town of Chrysotile. Properties such as high tensile strength and resistance to fire, heat, chemicals and electricity made it an ideal building material with many industrial uses. With hundreds of natural asbestos deposits in the state, the mining industry and production companies rapidly expanded in mineral-rich areas.



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Quick Facts About Asbestos in Arizona



Ranking in Deaths:

16th



Mesothelioma Deaths:

685



Asbestosis Deaths:

127



Total Deaths:

812

About Arizona

Many Indian reservations owned asbestos prospects and distributed the fibers to local and national businesses. By the early 1980s, most mining districts, including the most profitable area, the Gila County Salt River region, had been shut down for threatening public health. Hundreds of miners and industrial laborers with a history of extensive exposure experienced serious health complications, including [mesothelioma](#), a rare cancer that typically affects the lining of the lungs.

The state's asbestos mines were not the only sources of exposure. A [2008 report by the U.S. Geological Survey \(USGS\)](#) explains that in addition to the documented asbestos sites, limestone deposits in the counties of Gila and Pinal were contaminated.

Occupational exposure has been documented in several Arizona industries as well.

In May 2018, the Arizona Supreme Court ruled that asbestos defendants should not be held liable for illnesses caused by secondary asbestos exposure. Five justices supported the ruling and two dissented. The dissenting justices opined that children have a greater right to be protected from secondary asbestos exposure than adults.