

High-Risk Occupations Guide

Workers across a variety of industries were exposed to asbestos throughout the 20th century. Read on for a breakdown of which fields were often at the highest risk of occupational exposure—and of bringing asbestos home to their families.



Miners

▶ How were they historically exposed to asbestos?

Mines may have been contaminated with naturally occurring asbestos from talc, vermiculite, or other sources. Naturally occurring asbestos was even mined at some sites.

▶ Are workers in this occupation still at risk?

Potentially. Miners may still encounter naturally occurring asbestos.



Construction, Renovation, and Demolition Workers

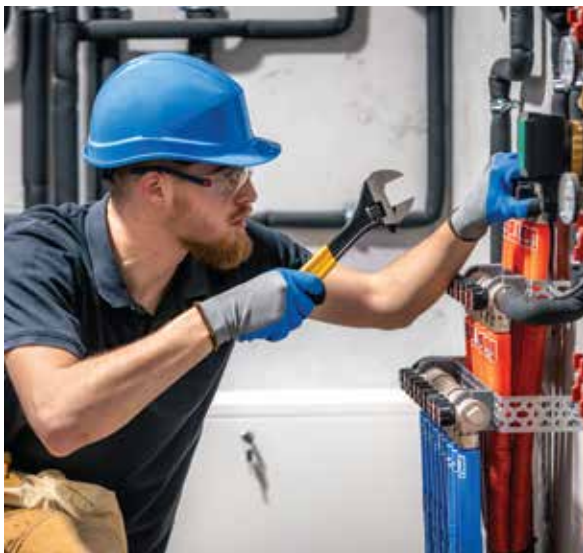
▶ How were they historically exposed to asbestos?

Asbestos-containing products were widely used in **construction** for much of the 20th century, including:

- Insulation
- Roofing shingles and felt
- Flooring tiles
- Drywall

▶ Are workers in this occupation still at risk?

Yes. Many older buildings still contain asbestos, putting workers at risk of exposure if it is disturbed without proper safety precautions.



Plumbers and Pipefitters

▶ How were they historically exposed to asbestos?

Many older pipes contained asbestos for its strength and heat resistance. When installing or servicing these components, **plumbers** may have breathed in asbestos fibers released by friction.

▶ Are workers in this occupation still at risk?

Potentially. Older buildings may still include asbestos piping, which can be dangerous to remove or replace without proper precautions.



Factory, Plant, and Mill Workers

▶ How were they historically exposed to asbestos?

Asbestos's general durability made it an ingredient in many components widely used in manufacturing facilities, chemical plants, and power plants.

▶ Are workers in this occupation still at risk?

Potentially. Older buildings may still contain asbestos, potentially exposing **plant workers**.



Firefighters

▶ How were they historically exposed to asbestos?

Older firefighting suits often contained asbestos, and **firefighters** were vulnerable to airborne asbestos fibers released during fires.

▶ Are workers in this occupation still at risk?

Potentially. While asbestos has been phased out of firefighting gear, firefighters responding to incidents at older buildings may still be at risk of airborne exposure.



Shipyard Workers

▶ How were they historically exposed to asbestos?

Asbestos was widely used in vessels to manage fire risks, putting those involved in building, repairing, or operating ships at high risk of exposure. Components that often contained asbestos include:

- Paint
- Insulation
- Pipe coverings
- Electrical wire coating
- Boilers and gaskets
- Adhesives and sealants

▶ Are workers in this occupation still at risk?

Yes. **Shipyard workers** repairing or decommissioning older vessels must take strict precautions to ensure their safety around asbestos-containing materials, though the mineral has been phased out of new ship production.



Auto Mechanics

▶ How were they historically exposed to asbestos?

Older vehicles often used asbestos-containing materials, especially brake pads and linings, gaskets, and sealants. When disturbed during repair work, these components put **auto mechanics** at risk of inhaling asbestos fibers.

▶ Are workers in this occupation still at risk?

Potentially. Those working on newer vehicles are unlikely to encounter asbestos, but mechanics working on classic cars and with older components need to take precautions to ensure their safety.