



March 2012

Dear Member,

NRCA is actively involved in the debate about occupational exposures to asphalt emissions. In October 2011, asphalt industry representatives met in Lyon, France, as the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) conducted its review of bitumen (asphalt); NRCA was invited to observe.

IARC's conclusion was "occupational exposures to oxidized bitumens and their emissions during roofing are probably carcinogenic to humans (Group 2A)." IARC has not yet made available a specific explanation of the basis for this determination. It will be one year or more before an IARC monograph addressing the subject will be published. In its news release, IARC states it found "sufficient evidence" of carcinogenicity in experimental animals and "limited" evidence in humans.

What does this mean for the roofing industry? IARC is not a regulatory agency, so it has no immediate bearing on OSHA regulation of workplace exposures or operations. However, its findings can trigger hazard disclosure requirements, including the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard and California's Proposition 65. For example, based on the IARC finding, manufacturers can be expected to change their material safety data sheets and product labels, which would prompt a contractor's duty to communicate that change to workers through his or her company's OSHA hazard communication program. In fact, Johns Manville already has notified its customers of its labeling changes because of the IARC finding.

For now, roofing contractors should continue to limit worker exposures to asphalt fumes because the current scientific evidence indicates there may be a potential concern. Fume exposure can be limited by such things as monitoring temperatures at the kettle and roof, meeting manufacturers' requirements, having workers wear proper personal protective equipment and clothing (in particular to prevent skin burns), and generally limiting exposure to fumes.

NRCA staff continues to meet with asphalt industry representatives to develop strategies going forward and identify areas where additional research may be needed.

It is likely the National Toxicology Program, which is roughly the U.S. version of IARC, will include asphalt in its next Report on Carcinogens to be reviewed; NRCA is monitoring that closely.

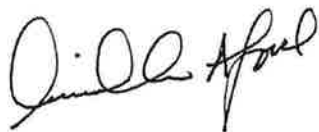
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**NATIONAL ROOFING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION**

To assist you in understanding this issue and help you answer employee and customer questions, NRCA is including three documents with this mailing. The first is a question-and-answer sheet that provides answers to typical questions related to the matter. The second provides questions and answers about short-term, nonoccupational exposures during hot asphalt roofing work; this document can be useful in answering customers' and others' concerns. It also can be used as a leave-behind flyer. Finally, NRCA's Statement Responding to IARC's Recent Announcements on the Results of Its Re-evaluation of the Potential Carcinogenicity of Asphalt and Asphalt Emissions in Roofing Operations provides an overview of the ruling and NRCA's response to it.

Each document provides similar information but has been created to assist you with your efforts to address the variety of audiences you might encounter. If you have any questions, please contact Tom Shanahan, NRCA's associate executive director of risk management, at (800) 323-9545, ext. 7538 or tshanahan@nrca.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. A. Good". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and "A" and a distinct "Good" at the end.

William A. Good, CAE  
Executive Vice President