

Owens Corning Roofing & Asphalt (OC or R&A)
IARC – Roofing and Asphalt Classification

FAQ for Roofing & Asphalt Customers

Q. What exactly did the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) conclude?

A. IARC announced its assessment of the potential cancer hazard of asphalt, which they call bitumen, used in roofing and paving applications. IARC concluded that occupational exposures to oxidized asphalts and its emissions during roofing applications should be classified under IARC’s classification system as “probably carcinogenic to humans” (also known as a “Group 2A Classification”). The “Group 2A” classification is based on IARC’s determination that there is limited evidence of carcinogenicity in humans and sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in experimental animals.

Q. Which Owens Corning™ products are included in IARC’s classification?

A. Owens Corning Roofing & Asphalt (OC or R&A) has determined that IARC’s classification applies to the following Built-Up Roofing asphalt products that it manufactures: Type 1, 2, 3, 4 TruLo®, TruLo Max® and PermaMop® asphalt.

Q. Does this mean that customers/roofing installers are/have been at risk?

A. Based on more than 20 years of research, we continue to believe that our roofing products are safe when recommended work practices are followed.

A 2002 Georgetown University analysis studied employees in our plants that manufacture and use the asphalt classified by IARC. **The study found no association between exposure to asphalt fumes and the risk of either lung cancer or non-malignant respiratory disease.**

According to the Asphalt Institute (AI), “while it is IARC’s task to identify cancer hazards, even when the risks are very low, these findings are not in line with industry conclusions based on its review of the extensive database of health studies including human and animal.” And, the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association (ARMA) states that “based on 20 years of research dedicated to the safe use of asphalt in roofing, ARMA believes that IARC’s finding is at odds with the available scientific evidence.” Regarding the studies referenced by IARC, ARMA further states that “in nearly every case the scientific validity of these studies has been compromised by the inability to exclude the effects of other known carcinogenic agents that are entirely unrelated to asphalt but are often present in these study populations.”

Q. Why is OC putting a new cancer warning label on some of its roofing products but not others?

A. Despite the years of research demonstrating our products are safe, manufacturers of materials that are classified by IARC as a probable carcinogen and used in the workplace are required by the U.S. Federal Hazard Communication Standard to be labeled as a carcinogen. We are continuing our assessment of the IARC classification and the underlying science to determine whether any additional actions are required under the U.S. Federal Hazard Communication Standard.

Q. What steps has OC taken to assure its roofing products are safe for installers and to reduce potential health risks associated with the products?

- A. We were industry leaders in inventing low-fuming built-up roofing asphalts (TruLo Max[®] asphalt) designed to reduce occupational exposure to asphalt fume emissions and BURA technology (PermaMop[®] asphalt) that can be applied in the field at reduced temperatures resulting in lower levels of fume emissions during application. We have also worked extensively with the National Roofing Contractors Association (NCRA), the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), ARMA and others to develop specific installation guidelines and training programs that promote the safe installation of our products.

Q. What new/additional steps will OC take to protect customers?

- A. We have formed an internal working group to thoroughly assess IARC's findings. This working group consists of a range of experts, including our medical director, director of toxicology and director of corporate epidemiology – some of whom are recognized experts on asphalts. The team is in the process of thoroughly reassessing all available scientific findings/literature on asphalts as they relate to the safety of relevant Owens Corning[™] products.

We also continue to study the health effects of asphalts. We are involved in an industry-wide study (to be completed in 2012) that is designed to extrapolate from IARC's animal studies the risk, if any, of cancer in humans.

Q. Will OC continue to make and sell these products?

- A. We will continue to manufacture and sell these products because we believe they are safe when recommended work practices are followed. At the same time, we will continue to extensively evaluate IARC's findings – independently and in partnership with ARMA, AI, IARC and others. Nothing is more important than the safety of our products and the people who make, install and use them.

Q. When can we expect IARC to publish its findings?

- A. At this time all that we have from IARC concerning its classification is a two-page press release and a two-page article published in the medical journal *Lancet Oncology*. IARC will prepare a lengthy "monograph" explaining its evaluation and findings in much greater detail. IARC projects that it may publish the monograph in as little as one year.

Q. When can we expect additional information from OC?

- A. We are committed to communicating openly on this matter. We will provide updates as soon as there is new, substantive information to share about any/all of the efforts underway to assess these findings.

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