

Manual of European Environmental Policy

The following pages are a section from the Manual of European Environmental Policy written by the Institute for European Environmental Policy.

The Manual was published by Earthscan/Routledge from 2010 to 2012. It was designed as an on-line interactive reference work and annual printed versions were also produced.

This section is the text of the Manual as published in 2012. It is therefore important to note the following:

- The contents have not been updated since 2012 and no guarantee is given of the accuracy of the contents given potential subsequent developments.
- The sections include links to external websites (e.g. to legal texts). These links continue to work as long as those links are not broken by those websites.
- The sections also include the original links that enabled interactivity within the published on-line version of the Manual. These links no longer work.

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The Manual should be cited as follows:

Farmer, A.M. (2012) (Editor). Manual of European Environmental Policy. 1043pp. Routledge, London.

Asbestos

Formal references	
87/217/EEC (OJ L85 28.03.1987)	Directive on the prevention and reduction of environmental pollution by asbestos
Proposed 29.11.1985 – COM(85)632	
Legal base	Articles 115 TFEU (originally Article 94 TEC) and 352 TFEU (originally Article 308 TEC)
Notification date	19 March 1987
Formal compliance	31 December 1988
Standards to be met for plants built or authorized before 31.12.1988	30 June 1991

Purpose of the Directive

The Directive controls the pollution of air, water and land by asbestos from all significant point sources. It is an example of the ‘substance-oriented’ approach of the fourth action programme and is the first attempt to set controls over pollution for air, water and land by one substance in a single Directive.

Summary of the Directive

The Directive places a general duty on Member States to ensure that asbestos emissions into the air, into water, and solid asbestos waste are, as far as reasonably practicable, reduced at source and prevented. The best available technology not entailing excessive costs (including where appropriate recycling or treatment) is to be employed where asbestos is used.

The Directive applies to crocidolite (blue asbestos), actinolite, anthophyllite, chrysotile (white asbestos), amosite (brown asbestos) and tremolite. Activities involving less than 100 kg of raw asbestos per year do not constitute ‘use’, which otherwise includes production of raw asbestos ore (but not mining of ore), and the manufacture and working of asbestos products.

Discharges to air are not to exceed a limit value of 0.1 mg/m³, but plants emitting less than 5,000 m³/h total gaseous discharges may be exempted where the discharge of asbestos does not exceed 0.5 g/h. Liquid effluents from asbestos cement and paper and board manufacture must be recycled. However, where this is not economically feasible in the asbestos cement industry, a limit is to be set of 30 g of total suspended matter per cubic metre of effluent discharged, and a limit set on the total quantity of suspended matter discharged per tonne of product.

The working of asbestos products and the demolition of buildings and structures containing asbestos are not to cause significant environmental pollution by asbestos fibres or dust. In the course of transport and landfill, no asbestos fibres or dust are to be released and no liquids containing asbestos fibres are to be spilled. At landfills, waste is to be so treated, packaged or covered that the release of asbestos fibres is prevented.

Discharges to air and water are to be monitored at regular intervals using methods laid down in an Annex or equivalent methods.

Development of the Directive

The explanatory memorandum, issued by the Commission with its proposal, set out tables showing the consumption of asbestos by country and by use. It also showed that national emission standards existed in France and the Federal Republic of Germany for air, and in France for discharges to water. It was on these standards that the proposal was based. The Economic and Social Committee considered that the proposed Directive should be made much more stringent in particular by calling for a complete ban on asbestos and mandatory use of substitutes. Both the emission limits to air and to water proposed by the Commission were modified before the Directive was agreed. In the case of emissions to air smaller plants were exempted, and in the case of discharges to water the French limit of 0.7 m³ of effluent discharged per tonne of asbestos–cement product was dropped.

Implementation of the Directive

Information on the measures taken by the Member States to the Directive can be found in their [national provisions](#). According to the Directive reports should be prepared every three years, but the last questionnaire was sent by the Commission in 1997.

Enforcement and court cases

There have been no recent European Court of Justice cases concluded in relation to this Directive