

STATEMENTS OF THE TRAVELERS INSURANCE COMPANY,
FILED IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR
THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, ON
JULY 14, 1981

Medical and scientific evidence has established
that serious lung diseases can become known and obvious to a
worker many years after the worker is exposed to asbestos
products; indeed, the exposure to asbestos products may
occur twenty years or more prior to the condition of
asbestosis being diagnosed.

... an insult to the body occurs at the first
inhalation of asbestos and although changes take place
thereafter, it is not until the disease is relatively
advanced that a firm diagnosis of asbestosis can be made.

Asbestosis is a non-malignant disease resulting
from the inhalation of asbestos fibers of a certain length
over a considerable period of time causing a bodily reaction
that may eventually impair the function of the lungs. The
body has several defense mechanisms that exclude from the
functional areas of the lungs most of the foreign matter
inhaled. It also has a mechanism for removing such matter
that passes these defenses. Asbestos fibers of a certain
length, however, cannot be removed and become embedded in
the lung tissue in the areas where the alveoli are found and
where the transfer of gases in and out of the blood takes
place. Being unable to remove these minute particles of
foreign matter, the body copes by walling off the particles.
The walling off is done by a proliferation of fibrous cells
that eventually produce a dense scar-like material in the
functional area of the lungs. This process takes about six
(6) months and is irreversible. Each repetition of
inhalation and reaction adds a tiny deposit of scar-like
tissue in this critical area.

The accumulation of scar-like tissue decreases the
functional volume of the lungs, stiffens the passage ways,
and impedes the transfer of gases in and out of the blood.