



For immediate release

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## **Canada's unions celebrate federal asbestos ban**

The Canadian Labour Congress is celebrating today's announcement that the federal government is banning the manufacture, import, export and use of asbestos.

"We can all breathe easier," said CLC president Hassan Yussuff. "This is good public health policy that will, without question, save lives for generations to come."

"Canada's unions, along with survivors and health advocates, have been working hard for this ban for decades. We know this will strengthen occupational health and safety protections for workers and make workplaces and public spaces safer for everyone," said Yussuff.

This year, Canada's unions redoubled their efforts to win a ban on asbestos, releasing a [powerful video](#) on Labour Day and staging a [captivating holographic installation](#) at West Edmonton Mall in October to raise awareness of the need for a ban.

More than 2,000 Canadians die every year from diseases caused by asbestos exposure such as mesothelioma and lung cancer. Experts estimate that 150,000 Canadians are exposed to asbestos at work, particularly in industries like construction, automobile maintenance, shipbuilding, trade contractors and waste management.

"Because these diseases have a long latency period, the danger is not over, but this is the beginning of the end," said Yussuff. "Now we need the provinces and territories to show the same leadership that the federal government has shown and move quickly to take stock of where asbestos is, harmonize regulation around disposal and remediation, and ensure a comprehensive health response," he added.

Yussuff also emphasized the need for governments to work with First Nations to address high levels of friable asbestos in on-reserve housing.

"We must ensure we move to protect everyone living in Canada from exposure, including those living in First Nations housing filled with asbestos-ridden vermiculite insulation," he said.

“This week’s announcement from the federal government is the result of years of advocacy and hard work by people dedicated to safer, healthier workplaces. Today, I celebrate with them and thank them for giving the next generation of Canadians a better future, free from the pain and suffering caused by asbestos,” Yussuff said.

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