

MEDIA ADVISORY

CBTU Commends Federal Government's Commitment to Workers Health and Safety

- Banning Asbestos important step forward to protecting Canadians and reducing workplace death and disease -

January 3, 2019 – Canada's Building Trades Unions are pleased with the Federal Government's steps to close out 2018 with a ban on the use of asbestos and products containing asbestos. Canada now joins 55 other countries that have banned the use of asbestos.

"The Federal Government's announcement to ban asbestos reflects their commitment to the health and safety of the Canadian workforce, and shows they have delivered on another one of their commitments since coming to office," said Robert Blakely, Canadian Operating Office, Canada's Building Trades Unions. "The CBTU has been lobbying on this issue for years, because workplace exposure to asbestos is one of the leading causes of workplace-related death within our affiliated unions. We now need governments at municipal, provincial and territorial levels to work with the Federal Government to develop a comprehensive strategy to account for and remove – safely – this substance from our existing buildings to lessen the impact on future generations of workers going forward."

Mesothelioma, the cancer related to asbestos exposure, can take 20 to 40 years to develop and begin causing symptoms. The mortality rate is devastating, about 60 per cent of those affected die within a year of diagnosis, and the five-year survival rate is less than seven per cent.

Blakely went on to say, "While this announcement will reduce the chances for asbestos exposure in the next generation, we still have a lot of work to do around the legacy of asbestos which includes a public registry of buildings with asbestos, regulations around asbestos exposure, safe removal and disposal of asbestos from current buildings and compensation for victims."

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About CBTU

Canada's Building Trades Unions is an alliance of 15 international unions in the construction, maintenance and fabrication industries that collectively represent over half a million skilled trades workers in Canada. Each year, our unions and our signatory

contractor partners invest over \$300 million in private sector money to fund and operate over 175 apprenticeship training and education facilities across Canada that produce the safest, most highly trained and productive skilled craft workers found anywhere in the world. Canada's Building Trades Unions represent members who work in more than 60 different trades and occupations, and generate 14 per cent of Canada's GDP.

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