

Aftermarket Brake Pad Standards and Specifications

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Brake pads manufactured in Ontario are safe, but not all brake pads currently sold in Ontario are necessarily safe. There are government brake performance standards that motor vehicle original equipment brake pad manufacturers must meet but these are not applied to the aftermarket. Most Ontario aftermarket brake pad manufacturers have been voluntarily meeting industry accepted brake performance validation test standards which are derived from motor vehicle original equipment brake performance standards. Based on recent test findings however, it is felt that this cannot be assumed true for product from other jurisdictions that is being sold in Ontario.

In addition to product performance standards relating to safe vehicle operation there is also a concern with the raw materials being used in the manufacture of brake pads. While no Ontario manufacturers are using Asbestos in the manufacture of brake pads it can still be found in parts manufactured in other jurisdictions. Based on recent findings where Asbestos has been found in brake pads sold but not manufactured in Ontario, it is felt that legislation needs to be put in place. Asbestos is no longer required to manufacture brake pads and the use of it jeopardizes the health and safety of those who come into contact with it.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- The Automotive Aftermarket (Parts and Distribution)
- Independent Automotive Service Providers
- Consumers

The automotive aftermarket industry in Canada is valued at \$16 billion annually and employs over 225,000 people across Canada. The aftermarket consists of the parts and accessories manufacturers, warehouse and regional distributors, large retail chains and independent automotive service providers.

The aftermarket is distinct from the OEM assemblers, parts manufacturers and dealer network.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND WHO IS AFFECTED?

By allowing brake pads that are not tested to accepted standards and specifications to be sold in Ontario the general public and Ontario drivers are being put at risk. Brake pads that do not perform to accepted brake performance standards have the potential to impact vehicle braking performance resulting in compromised vehicle control especially when needed most in panic braking situations.

Asbestos has been identified as the source of Mesothelioma an aggressive cancer that develops in the Mesothelial cells that line many organs and body cavities. As brake

pads wear, dust is created and becomes airborne or collects near the vehicle brake system. If this brake pad dust contains asbestos it will endanger those who come in contact with it. This danger especially applies to Mechanics and anyone who changes brake pads. Even if contact is made with brake dust containing Asbestos the health problem may not become apparent until 20 to 30 years later.

In 2000, a Seattle newspaper carried out a 31 garage investigation across the country finding Asbestos in 21 of the shops visited. The concentrations of Asbestos in the dust ranged as high as 64 percent. If compressed air is used to remove Asbestos contaminated dust from the braking system during brake pad replacement there is an even higher risk of Asbestos dust being inhaled. The risk of inhaling Asbestos contaminated brake dust also increases if brake pad shape is modified by grinding during brake work. Asbestos is prohibited in original equipment brake pads but many Mechanics do not know that Asbestos can be present in Aftermarket brake pads from other jurisdictions.

Recent studies show that automotive Mechanics have a significantly higher incidence rate of lung cancer than the general population and evidence points to similar numbers for Mesothelioma which is almost exclusively caused by exposure to Asbestos.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE PROBLEM?

Economic pressures have squeezed manufacturers and pushed many to move production offshore to lower labour costs. The continual downward pricing pressure has created a market for products that do not reflect the kind of product testing, fit and function that Canadian aftermarket brake pad manufacturers have become accustomed to offering and seeing from their competitors. Without standards or specifications in place there are no controls in the marketplace and some manufacturers from other jurisdictions are selling product into Ontario that is not safe.

Performance test benchmarking of pads manufactured in other jurisdictions has shown everything from pads catching fire to just not making it through the accepted tests. Recent findings from material analysis of pads from other jurisdictions showed Asbestos to be present in the pads.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

- Performance testing of Aftermarket brake pads made in jurisdictions outside of Ontario has been completed.
- Material analysis of brake pads manufactured in jurisdictions outside Ontario has also been completed.
- Awareness to the Automotive Aftermarket (Parts and Distribution) Industry, Independent Automotive Service Providers and the general public has been initiated through Automotive Sector magazines and members of the press who cover automotive related issues.
- Bill 181 has been prepared and passed first reading in the Ontario legislature.

WHAT IS NEXT?

Monitoring of Aftermarket brake pads for both performance and Asbestos content is ongoing.

Discussion with various levels of government to investigate a legislative or regulatory solution has been initiated. Bill 181 is to be presented at the Ontario Legislature for further readings. Bill 181 will address performance standards and Asbestos content concerns with Aftermarket brake pads being sold in Ontario produced in jurisdictions other than Ontario.

WHY SUPPORT THIS ISSUE?

MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS FOR ROAD SAFETY

Without standards and specifications in place Aftermarket brake pads can be sold in Ontario that compromise vehicle stopping performance. This exposes Ontario drivers and the general public unnecessarily to risk of serious injury or even death.

PROTECT INDIVIDUAL HEALTH

Legislation needs to be put in place to prohibit the use of Asbestos in Aftermarket brake pads that are sold in Ontario. Without this legislation Asbestos can be present in brake dust thereby putting Mechanics at risk of being exposed to a substance which can cause cancer.

PRODUCE TANGIBLE BENEFITS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Eliminating the potential of having asbestos in brake pads eliminates the possibility of having air borne Asbestos particulate in the air. It is known that exposure to even a small amount of airborne Asbestos can have serious effects on health.