ABS Friction Has a Story to Tell

A BIG Concern– Asbestos Brake Pads

A recent program on TV should concern all of us.

BY **SHIRLEY BROWN**

It was about asbestos and the fact that imported brake pads and linings have asbestos in them. It all centred around what the Director of Research and Co-Founder of ABS Friction, Joe Schmidt, had to say to the public about the issue of no regulations or standards for aftermarket disc brake pads in Canada.

CarCare Business contacted Rick Jamieson, CEO ABS Friction, located in Guelph, Ont. Jamieson told us that brake pads containing asbestos are not yet banned in Canada! Companies are realizing how dangerous this product can be to technicians and those handling it. Furthermore, other industries have not been able to stop the flow of these dangerous goods! Twice now, Members of Parliament have tried to put through Private Member Bills to put a stop to these products, but the bills have never made it to a third reading in the House!

More Facts

The Canadian Labour Congress has declared Asbestos as #1 environmental killer of Canadian workers—it's what ABS has been talking about for some time. So rather than fighting this fight alone, ABS now has a strong ally that's supporting the motion to ban asbestos. In addition, the Globe and Mail recently covered the health issues of asbestos and said the substance is still entering Canada in significant volume via brake pads. In fact it reported that $6-million worth of brake pads have been imported (roughly 1 million sets)!

Jaimeson notes that the average automotive service provider and repair shop owner really believe that asbestos is bad. They don't believe, however, that it's found in brake pad sets. "ASPs are really not taking good care of themselves while installing these products," says Jamieson. "They take off their mask and use the air hose to blow the dust off the wheels—putting it into the air and immediate environment around them."

Think About It

This should make all technicians and repair shop owners really stop and think: Do I really want to work in these conditions? Do I really believe I'm not being exposed to a dangerous item? Yes, I wear a mask, but asbestos fibres will cling to me and to my hat and clothes. Do they go home with me? And is it wise to blow asbestos dust into the air? Take a minute to add this all up. Is the cheapest brake pad really worth your health?

The message here is for your own good—asbestos is a dangerous health concern. Be aware of your own safety and the safety of those around you if you're going to continue installing brake pads with asbestos in them.

The U.S. outlawed asbestos in brake pads last year, along with other nations. But Canada has still not made the commitment to ban its use. You can stop the use of asbestos brake pads in your shop by telling others. Together we can demand that the Canadian government go the way of many other nations and ban brake pads and linings containing asbestos. It's the smart thing to do!