



The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), based in Lyon, France, issued a statement today assigning occupational exposures to straight-run asphalt cement and its emissions during road paving a Group 2B (“possibly carcinogenic to humans”) classification. This Group 2B classification puts road paving in the same category as numerous exposures, including cell phones and coffee.

NAPA President Mike Acott responded to the IARC announcement saying, “The asphalt paving industry has always taken questions about workers’ health and safety seriously. That’s why we appreciate IARC’s commitment to creating the healthiest possible workplace through its scientific review process.”

Dr. Jim Melius, DrPH, MD, the top occupational physician at the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA), commented, “People working in the asphalt paving industry should not be concerned about this new IARC classification. The two key animal studies on paving asphalt did not show any evidence of cancer risk, and the major IARC cancer study of people working in the paving industry in Europe did not show any increased risk for cancer.”

Acott added, “For more than 20 years, we have partnered on research with government agencies, academic institutions, and unions. Our goals have been, first and foremost, to protect the workers by reducing their exposure; and while we are doing that, to cooperate in research that will fill the gaps in the science.

“We will continue this collaborative approach, which has led to technology advances such as warm-mix asphalt that are improving the work environment even further,” Acott concluded.

IARC, which brings together international panels of scientists, is based in Lyon, France. Its assessments go to national health agencies for possible guidance. IARC has reviewed more than 900 chemicals and other agents since its founding in 1971. IARC categorizes chemicals, agents, mixtures and exposures.

The asphalt paving industry has been recognized for its worker health initiatives. The industry received the NORA (National Occupational Research Agenda) Award from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in recognition of the industry’s partnering on research that protects worker health and safety. In addition, the Asphalt Partnership (including contractors, government agencies, academics, and unions) was a finalist in the Innovations in American Government Awards sponsored by the Ford Foundation and administered by the Kennedy School of Government.

Questions about the IARC announcement should be directed to Margaret B. Cervarich, NAPA’s Vice President for Communications and Public Affairs, at 301-731-8845 or [mbc@AsphaltPavement.org](mailto:mbc@AsphaltPavement.org).

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