



OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH REPORTER

A weekly review of occupational safety and health developments

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HIGHLIGHTS OF CURRENT REPORT

A FURTHER REDUCTION in funding for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for fiscal 1982 is approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee. The panel votes a funding level of \$200.56 million, of which \$5.4 million would be shifted from enforcement activities to voluntary compliance assistance (p. 459).

A 'DRAMATIC' DECLINE in OSHA enforcement activity is indicated in agency statistics for 1981, the AFL-CIO charges in a memorandum to its member unions. The federation urges union officials to do what they can to publicize the situation, and gather information on specific cases to further "illustrate these deficiencies" (p. 459).

THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS on a suit arising from the death of an asbestos worker begins to run from the date his lung cancer was discovered, rather than from the date on which he was diagnosed as having asbestosis, a judge for the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia rules (p. 460). . . . The New York State Court of Appeals holds that plaintiffs claiming injury from inhalation of asbestos particles must file suit within four years of their last inhalation of asbestos, and not after discovering their health problems (p. 460).

IMPOSITION OF A STAY of the workplace cotton dust standard for knitting operations was carried out by OSHA in an "outrageous" fashion and without prior consultation with organized labor, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union charges in a letter to a Senate oversight committee (p. 460).

AN ASBESTOS SUIT filed by six retired bricklayers should be dismissed, Bethlehem Steel Corporation urges in a motion to a federal district court. The workers charged that the company intentionally concealed evidence of the workers' asbestos-related lung disease, which they allege was contracted at a Bethlehem plant in Maryland (p. 461).

OSHA MUST PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY with its proposal to use joint labor-management committees to supplement federal enforcement efforts at individual worksites, a subgroup of the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health warns. The two specific proposals under consideration by the agency, Project Build and the STAR program, could interfere with the rights of both unions and management, and could undermine legal remedies under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the chairman of the subgroup asserts (p. 462).

A GOOD FAITH EFFORT must be made by OSHA to complete a field sanitation standard for agricultural laborers in the next 18 months, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia rules. OSHA's actions to this point in delaying a standard for portable toilets, drinking water, and handwashing facilities were "irrational and taken in bad faith," the court holds (p. 462).

DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN ARSENIC and excess cancer rates found in smelter workers exposed to the substance remain unclear and difficult to determine, researchers report at a symposium sponsored by the Chemical Manufacturers Association and the National Bureau of Standards (p. 463).

REAGAN ADMINISTRATION POLICIES that will "impede effective safety and health programs" will be opposed by the American Public Health Association, the organization states in a resolution adopted at its annual meeting. Two former Carter Administration officials, Anthony Robbins and Bailus Walker, Jr., are elected to leadership positions in the association (p. 464). . . . A finding of high rates of brain cancer and malignant melanoma among workers at the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons plant in Colorado leads a speaker at the meeting to call for independent and comprehensive epidemiological investigation of nuclear workers (p. 465).

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