FILE NAME: Asbestos Cement Pipe and Sheet (ACPS)

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Call to Bill Nicholson, Mt. Sinai
212-650-5821

He has no data on asbestos levels from sawing A-C sheet per se, but will look through his files to find what data has been published by others on this. He can make inferences from his knowledge of asbestos dust from sawing insulation, however. He has found that presently available exhaust ventilation for band saws can reduce exposures of operators to 0.1 f/cc asbestos (the present OSHA limit is 2.0). This is an enormous reduction from previously reported levels for sawing insulation, which far exceeded even the 1938 TLV of 5 MPPCF. (For asbestos-cement dust, 2 f/cc is about 1 MPPCF) Nicholson said that dust control for sawing A-C panels would be even better than with insulation, because the panels are thinner, and thus present an easier control problem.

He said that although high-velocity, low-volume local exhaust ventilation was not in use in the 1940's, there is no reason why it could not have been. That is, there have been no essential technological advances in the manufacture of enclosures and exhaust fans, or even fabric filters for dust collection, since the 1930's. We can maintain that the late introduction of this type of control technology was a result of the failure of J-M et al. to warn about the need for it. And we can show that over 99% of the dust from sawing Transite could have been captured; had this been done, Frances would in all likelihood be well today.

Bill said it would be okay to tentatively list him as available to testify at a trial in March. He understands that all we want from him is ventilation engineering stuff, not medical literature. We will have to keep after him, though, I have had experience often with tardiness and delays on commitments made by Bill.

He told one story that we can use, to show how simple it would have been to provide protection to saw operators. He said an equipment manufacturer rigged up a fan and enclosure drawing air from the saw in series through two 50 gallon drums to a fabric air filter dust collector. This arrangement sold for $600, and was an effective means of controlling dust from sawing insulation (or Transite, I imagime -- that was in 1968).

December 6, 1978