CHAPTER II

Industrial Hygiene Records and Reports

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I. Introduction

Industrial hygiene is pre-eminently an American approach to the problems of occupational diseases and the health of industrial employees. In control of hazardous situations it has made remarkable strides in the past quarter century. Whether the statistical data necessary for proper appraisal of successes, failures, and additional needs and for appropriate action have kept pace with technical know-how is debatable. In the eyes of one of our English colleagues, Mr. Bryan Harvey, an inspector of factories who did graduate work at Harvard University:

> It [American industrial hygiene] shows great energy and drive and the marked characteristics of the vigorous private enterprise that so largely supports it. It lacks, to English eyes at least, coordination. What state control there is, is of 48 different varieties. . . . In particular, they lack national accurate statistics of the incidence and morbidity of industrial disease. While one may well be lost in admiration for the forceful and painstaking efforts which industrial hygiene is making to control the industrial environment there is little accurate data by which to judge its success.[1]

Nearly all data begin with either records or reports. Both, to be of value, must be accurate, complete, appropriate, and at the same time as concise as possible. Records should be readily accessible. There are many reasons for keeping records applicable to industrial hygiene activities. A large number of them are intended to provide, at some future date, information on the individual and the influence of his working environment upon him from the date he was hired. Records of an employee's pre-employment and periodic medical examinations as well as studies of his industrial environment, either periodically or in continuous recording, are of this class. One aspect, which points up the great need for accuracy and specificity here, is the fact that any or all of these records could become part of a court case. If this should occur it might be necessary for the person who actually prepared the record to testify regarding it.

Another purpose in keeping records is to develop a basis for a statistical analysis of the effect of the environment on groups of persons: to provide an

[1] B. Harvey, Some personal observations on industrial health in the United States of America, *Brit. J. Ind. Med.*, **11**, 222 (1954).