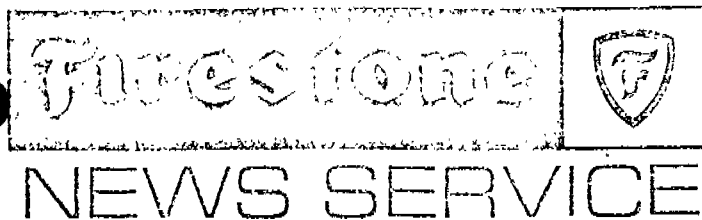


Ray Johnson



THE FIRESTONE TIRE & RUBBER COMPANY

Corporate & Public Relations Department

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R. W. Laundrie

Statement by
Firestone Plastics Company
on the
National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
Report on
Genetic Risks of Vinyl Chloride

A recently issued report on GENETIC RISKS OF VINYL CHLORIDE was based on part of an overall health survey at the Firestone Plastics Company's Pottstown, Pa., facility in October, 1974.

The survey was conducted by Federal health officials in cooperation with Firestone in connection with studies instituted after vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) was identified as a possible cause of angiosarcoma, a form of liver cancer believed related to massive exposure to VCM over an extended period of time.

The report was made public late in January by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and has been submitted for publication to Lancet, a medical journal in England.

Firestone received a copy of the report early in February from Dr. Peter F. Infante, a NIOSH epidemiologist.

The 1974 survey was conducted by NIOSH at Firestone's plant in Pottstown because operations there include both tire manufacturing and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) production, enabling researchers to study employees with exposure to vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) and

those without such exposure for purposes of data control.

The Firestone facility was selected for the survey because the combination of workers exposed to VCM and not exposed to VCM in one location was unique in the industry.

The data in the report appear to indicate that statistically wives of workers exposed to VCM are more likely to suffer miscarriages and stillbirths than those who are not.

The information was obtained from interviews with 253 workers at the Firestone plant, but no interviews were conducted with workers' wives and no data were obtained concerning maternal ages except indirectly through paternal age.

This report certainly indicates the need for further research and study even though it would be premature to draw firm conclusions about the precise role of VCM exposure as a cause of miscarriages or stillbirths.

Firestone remains greatly concerned about the possibility of genetic and other health risks that may be associated with exposure to VCM. We will continue to cooperate with industry, union, government and public health groups in studying this matter and in taking steps to reduce exposure levels as we have been doing since the possible health risks of exposure to VCM first became known.

This NIOSH report was based on a survey of workers whose exposure to VCM in prior years was many times greater than the exposure level of one part per million parts of air that is the

Federal standard going into effect April 1. Exposure in the area surrounding the plant as the result of emission to the atmosphere would be a minute fraction of that level.

Whatever risk to health existed as the result of exposure to VCM in the past should be substantially lessened or potentially eliminated by the drastically reduced exposure levels that will be required in the industry from now on.

end