FILE NAME: Asbestos in Hair Dryers (HD)

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File GATE MAX HAIR DRYERS

Gillette Medical Evaluation Laboratories — Inter-Office Memo

Date: July 2, 1974

From: J. Akerson

To: R. Giovacchini

Subject: NEISS In-Depth Studies - Hair Dryers

Copies to: F. Adami
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I have reviewed the NEISS In-Depth Studies on the following NEISS catagories:

1602	Hair Dryers
1603	Hair Curlers, Hair Pins, Hair Clips, etc.
1627	Hair Curlers, Electric, with Steam
1628	Hair Curlers, Electric, without Steam

Enclosed is a review of each of these studies. Much of this data predates CPSC and reflects several FDA sponsored field investigations in Boston and Denver.

James M. Akerson

JMA/gj

CONFIDENTIAL

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1. Super Max HD-7-9120 (Gillette) - 650 Watts - (Made in Japan)

The subject was a 25 year old female. In 1973 she had been using this dryer for about 3 months. In the past she had noticed that the dryer and handle surface became quite hot after approximately 10 minutes use, and that occasionally the dryer stopped automatically. When this occurred, she just unplugged the unit.

Finally, with the switch on "dry" position she noticed the unit began to smoke and become extremely hot after 10 minutes use. She then unplugged the unit and called Gillette in Boston. She was told to "send the dryer to the firm's office in Wisconsin where it would be repaired." (Quotes indicate verbatim copy from report.) In addition, she was also told "it was doubtful she could get her money back".

The comment about Wisconsin was in the report although the return unit is in Minnesota. It was not possible to determine if the girl was told incorrectly or she reported inaccurately.

2. Max For Men - Model HD-5 (Gillette) - (Made in Japan) - Serial #025138272
Broomfield, Colorado 1974

A 30 year old male purchased a Max For Men HD-5. Since he was already familiar with the model through prior use, he did not bother to read the instructions. In fact, he claimed that his dryer didn't have any instructions when purchased.

After 2 months use, while using the brush attachment with the dryer set on "dry", the attachment fell off and the hot grill of the blower touched the skin on the back of his neck. He received 1st degree burns (Hyperemic) of the neck. Color photos (showing the burns and the dryer) were attached to the file.

During the follow-up investigation a second dryer was purchased to obtain an instruction booklet. It was found by CPSC (?) that the grill rim is metal with plastic cross bars. During use both rim and cross bars became hot enough to cause burns.

3. G.E. Hairdryer
Denver, Colorado 1967

A 19 year old female burned her wrist on the dryer hose. 3 days later she sought medical attention as the burn became infected.

4. Sunbeam Hairdryer - Model HD-3 - Portable bonnet type
Somerville, Massachusetts 1968

A 23 year old female fell asleep while using the hairdryer and sustained 1st and 2nd degree burns where the hose lay across her arm. The dryer was set on "high". Normally, the subject turned the setting down but this time fell asleep. The subject reported the dryer had "been around for years".

5. Universal Hairdryer - Handy Hannah - Deluxe Model UH2995DR
Boston, Massachusetts 1968

A 23 year old female fell asleep while drying her hair with her arm across the hose of a portable hairdryer. She noticed the 2nd degree burn the next day. The dryer was set on "medium". The investigator described this subject as "having had cerebral palsy since birth with good adjustment. Better than average muscle control as compared to a more severe case of cerebral palsy". The report claims this dryer is no longer made.

6. Universal Hairdryer - Handi Hannah Deluxe - Serial #UH21950(3)
Holliston, Massachusetts 1969

A 28 year old female fell asleep watching television while drying her hair. She received 2nd degree burns on her left hand where it was in contact with the hose. She discovered the blister on her hand the next morning.

The following conclusion was made by the investigator. "Hazard - the air does not seem to circulate well enough if the hose hangs freely, so the victim generally supports the hose with her hand when drying her hair".

7. Universal Handy Hannah Portable Electric Hair Dryer
Memphis, Tennessee 1973

A two year old boy grabbed the hot end of the dryer when the mother set it down on a stool. He received 1st degree burns on the right palm.

8. "President Model" Capital Hair Dryers of Chicago - Serial #3938
Wellington, Colorado August 1, 1971

A 17 year old female died of fright and electric shock while under the hair dryer. The death certificate (in the file) gave the immediate cause of death as pulmonary edema, severe electrical shock and fright. The case was originally located through a TV newscast. In the subsequent investigation the all metal hair dryer was found to be about 20 years old with a direct short on the "hot" position of the 4 position switch. The dryer did not have a 3 prong plug. The girl, with metal clips in her hair, was sitting in the door of the bathroom. She had to lean one arm on the lavatory which had a leaky faucet. The girl was also barefoot. When she touched the lavatory she rose screaming and then fell to the floor.

9. "Chic" - (see in text)
Belmont, Massachusetts 1972

A seven year old girl used an electric hair dryer under the blankets of her bed to provide extra warmth to alleviate her discomfort from fever and chills. The heat generated by using the hair dryer in an enclosed, unventilated space set fire to the bedding and her night-gown. The victim suffered 2nd and 3rd degree burns on her arms, legs, and trunk. The hair dryer was over 10 years old and had no thermostat.

The child's mother was one of the original organizers and active participants in a newly established consumers' group "Action for the Prevention of Burn Injuries to Children". This report also was filed under "Flammable Fabrics".

The case report also states, "The electric hair dryer which served as the ignition source, was being used in a manner clearly not intended by the manufacturer and, yet, in a manner which appears plausible to the mind of a young child experiencing distress from an acute illness. Clearly, products must be designed for safety in all reasonably anticipated uses." The report then comments that a recent model of "Chic" has precautionary labeling against using in a manner that would block the air intake. Also, it is now thermostated. The following comment was then inserted in the report, apparently by the investigator. "The safety modifications and operating instructions associated with the new hair dryer clearly reveal the deficiencies of the older model involved in this case".

Since the hairdryer burned, only the letters "Chic" were legible. This may have been a "Lady Schick" although the next report shows a different variation of this name and may indicate there is also a "Chic" dryer. The terminology used in this memo reflects the usage in the reports.

10. Lady Chic Hair Dryer (Lady Schick?)
Greensboro, North Carolina 1973

A twelve year old boy used the dryer after a shampoo. He lay down on a bed with the unit on and fell asleep. The bed consisted of a heavy cotton mattress and polyester blanket. (Also cited as flammable fabric.) The dryer evidently overheated and shorted out setting fire to the blanket. The fire melted the plastic from the case and the polyester blanket. The boy received 1st and 2nd degree burns on his arms and trunk from the melted plastic.

11. Schick Hand Hair Dryer

This was a short report of a case where a dryer was dropped in a bathtub electrocuting the bather. No date or location was noted.

12. Veeco Dryer Model #400
Longview, Washington 1972

This was an incomplete report indicating the motor of the dryer overheated damaging the dryer only. There was no personal injury.

13. Unknown dryer
McPherson, Kansas 1973

A two year old girl was restless and wouldn't sleep. The mother set a hair dryer on a table at the foot of the bed and directed the air stream onto a mobile suspended over the girl's head. The girl was left alone for about 20 minutes. In the meantime the dryer had fallen off the table onto the girl's legs. The heat from the dryer had melted the fabric of the sleepwear which then stuck to the legs. The girl received 1st and 2nd degree burns on the legs. The dryer was discarded and was not identified.

14. "Soverign" dryer, Wm. Meyer Co.
Downington, Pennsylvania 1972

A 25 year old female was assembling a pole type dryer when she inadvertantly released a spring collapsing the pole unit. The dryer fell against her forehead causing lacerations.

15. Top-Petit (Made in Japan)
Kent, Washington 1972

A two year old girl was injured when she picked up a hair dryer left running on a chair by her brother. The child placed the hot end in her mouth and received 2nd degree burns of the mouth. These burns will require plastic surgery. The report concludes that these were probably electrical burns since the outer surface of the dryer was cool enough to touch. The heating elements, however, were near the edge and moisture from the mouth may have caused an electrical burn.

16. J. C. Penney "Penncraft" Electric Hair Dryer
Memphis, Tennessee 1972

An 18 month old boy was getting up from the floor to walk with his mother. His foot slipped on the hardwood floor and he fell against a hair dryer stored on the floor. He received lacerations of the lower lip.

17. "Professional of Hollywood" Dryer
(no location) 1973

A consumer complaint alleged that a dryer set on "medium heat" exploded inside the case after two minutes operation. A replacement dryer, also in the "medium heat" position, overheated within two minutes, burned the hand of the user, dropped to the floor and scorched a rug. There was no reported injury.

18. Eastern 600 Styler/Dryer Model #D5501 - (Made in Japan)
(Manufacturers name changed to Morton Springer Co.)
Penn Hills, Pennsylvania 1974

A 14 year old female noticed sparks flying from the air outlet of the dryer in a dark room. She claimed that the sparks singed her hair.

19. Sun Model D-5501 Dryer (on dryer)
Hatashi Mist Styler/Dryer - 600 Watts - (Made in Japan) (on box)
(note similarity with report 18)
Portland, Oregon 1974

A 16 year old girl noticed flames coming from the dryer brush attachment after the dryer was running for five minutes. She observed that the heating coils were actually flaming and that the flames had to be blown out after unplugging the dryer. She reported singed hair.

20. Eastern Personal Styler/Dryer for Women & Men - Model #D-5002 - (Made in Japan)
Levittown, Pennsylvania 1973

A twelve year old girl burnt the fingers on her right hand when the plastic case of the dryer became excessively hot and partially melted. She also reported that she felt an electric shock.

21. GWE Dryer (Taiwan?)
Saukville, Wisconsin 1973

A 52 year old female received the dryer as a promotion. During the second use the dryer flamed and hot plastic and solder fell onto the user's legs. She received 1st degree burns of the back and side of her legs. The dryer was unplugged and thrown outdoors where it self-extinguished. Photos were included of the badly burned dryer.

22. Norelco Mist Dry 750 Model HB7600
Fayetteville, Arkansas

This report stated that a metal bar on the hair dryer gets hot and burns your hand.

23. Clairol Air Brush Styling Dryer AB-1

This brief report claimed the dryer gave electric shocks.

24. Unspecified Dryer

A newspaper clipping from the Philadelphia Inquirer of March 5, 1974 contained a notice of the death by electrocution from an unspecified hair dryer of a mother of 2 (Marie Zanand (?))