

ASBESTOS STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT

Most industrial managers are well aware of the increasing amount of time they must devote to problems relating to occupational and environmental hazards. In recent years new government agencies have been created which have broad powers to investigate, regulate and control industrial operations. During the same period the mandates of traditional agencies also have been broadened in respect to environmental concerns, and frequently there are duplicate and sometimes conflicting functions. Coincidentally, the scientific community has been producing an increasing volume of evidence regarding hitherto unsuspected health hazards associated with various raw materials, chemicals and manufacturing methods.

Adding further to the burdens these developments place on industrial managers is a far more militant union attitude on occupational health matters. Union spokesmen, such as I. W. Abel, Tony Mazzochi and Sheldon Samuels, freely admit they have been negligent in facing these issues in the past. However, recently a new attitude has been in evidence and it is exemplified by Mazzochi's statement that, "We live in a nation of corporate law breakers." Samuels has not been as charitable; he prefers to use the term "Corporate Murderers."

The present union objective, as stated by Mazzochi, is to "use professionals to educate laborers to understand health hazards" and to "use collective bargaining to get legislation necessary to obtain good occupational health care." The AFL-CIO has an active campaign to use the news media to get the message across to the general public as well as to their members.

The friction materials industry position with respect to the asbestos health issue is almost unique. Few other industries are as heavily dependent upon asbestos for the successful performance of their products, and proper handling of occupational and environmental problems associated with the use of asbestos is essential to the survival of manufacturers of asbestos-based friction materials.

During the past year your Asbestos Study Committee has worked closely with CSHA, EPA, NIOSH and their subcontractors as well as with AIA/NA regarding new standards and regarding changes to existing standards and guidelines for regulation of asbestos as well as other materials. We have sought to keep abreast of new information regarding asbestos health effects, control methods and regulations emanating from the medical/scientific communities, various government offices and other sources. The following highlights should be of interest.

CSHA

Proposed new standards for arsenic and for ketones present new formats with emphasis on the action level concept, on work practices and on improved medical surveillance. Expected revisions to the asbestos standard probably will follow one of these formats. Little or no change is expected in permissible airborne concentrations or in monitoring methods.

The erroneous assumption by CSHA that the friction materials industry could immediately comply with the 2 fpec standard hopefully has been corrected.