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April 22, 1976

TO: T. E. Nevins
FROM: E. Maynard
SUBJECT: WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS
JOINT SYSTEMS



CC: B. M. Hostrup - #170-S
C. M. Howard - #147-2

CCPD

1. Field tests of the non-asbestos READY MIX TOPPING made at East Chicago have been postponed until next week. The tests will be in the Chicago area and W. C. Anderson will follow them.
2. An interrogatory was sent to Mr. Duffy from the Attorney General's office for the State of Minnesota concerning USG's compliance with the state law on asbestos in joint compounds sold or used there. Joint compounds are shipped to Minnesota from the East Chicago plant. All powder joint compounds are non-asbestos (USG TOPPING released in 1972, USG TAPING in 1973 and USG ALL PURPOSE in early 1974). READY MIX ALL PURPOSE and TOPPING still contain asbestos however.

An acceptable non-asbestos READY MIX was developed in 1973, but raw material cost was high. Marketing requested that development continue until a non-asbestos formula could be released without cost increase. New Brighton was bulletined in May 1975 at no cost increase, but to make this formula at East Chicago (MIDWAY) would increase their cost.

In May, 1975, East Chicago (and Gypsum) were bulletined for both non-asbestos READY MIX ALL PURPOSE and TOPPING. Though the cost was still somewhat higher than their asbestos READY MIX, Research could see no way of reducing raw material cost further without an acceptable terra alba filler at East Chicago. Dept. #147-2 requested these non-asbestos formulas to be bulletined in May, 1975 for use by CCPD in emergency or where non-asbestos products are specified. They were field tested, but none sold as far as we know. Operating Dept. is still attempting to get terra alba for East Chicago.

3. East Chicago made further modifications this week on the Raymond air separator and improved the filler quality to 89-92% through a 325 mesh and 100% through 60 mesh. A sample will come to Research for confirmation.

A rectangular stamp with a black border. Inside, the text "PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT" is printed in bold, with "GF-1850" printed below it.

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
GF-1850

UNITED STATES GYPSUM COMPANY

Q4. Well, how do I "minimize possible hazards"? What are "safe" working conditions, and what can I, as a drywall contractor, do about it?

A4. The Gypsum Association has published a booklet, Guidelines For Compliance With OSHA Asbestos Standards, which you may find helpful reading. In addition, I am sure you are already discussing OSHA regulations with your attorney - ask him about asbestos and other dust problems and what you should do.

Q5. Well, all the burden seems to be on me as a contractor. Just what are you as a manufacturer doing to help me with these problems?

A5. As an employer, you have certain obligations to your employees depending upon the concentration of asbestos fibers and dust in the air where they work. This depends on your job practices. OSHA spells out very precise standards and scientific procedures for measuring the amount of asbestos fibers released from these products in their use. If usage of asbestos-containing products creates airborne concentrations of fibers that may be in excess of OSHA exposure limits, then warnings are required. Although we have no control over the amount of fibers released, we have placed caution labels on our powder goods packages because we know mixing creates some dust. And more recently, it was decided to label our ready mixed product containers, as well, simply to help you get the message across and to help you fulfill any obligations you may have.

Moreover, the elimination of asbestos fibers from our joint compound products has received and will receive top priority in our research efforts.

CMH:clm

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