



AOMA Report

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REGULATORY ACTION IMMINENT ON CARCINOGENS, HEXAVALENT CHROMIUM AND PESTICIDES

In the first edition of the Regulatory Calendar of Federal Regulations issued February 28, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has indicated that it expects to issue the final standard on carcinogens and to publish notices of proposed rulemaking covering hexavalent chromium and pesticides in the spring of 1979.

The Regulatory Council was created by the President on October 31 to help coordinate Federal regulatory activities and to expand efforts to manage the regulatory process more effectively. Twenty of the Regulatory Council's 35 member agencies have listed major regulations under development in the first Council Calendar.

In a memorandum to Douglas Costle, Regulatory Council Chairman, Charles Knapp, special assistant to the Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall, commented on the beryllium and noise standards, notably missing from DOL's calendar of activities in the regulatory realm. "The beryllium standard, originally thought to be major, has, through further study, proved to be considerably less costly than anticipated and so is not included." No explanation of this statement was given. Regarding the noise standard, Mr. Knapp said, "the noise standard will see no action in the next six months, during which time staff analysis will determine whether or not we wish to proceed with it." OSHA officials have since emphasized that they do still intend to revise the noise standard.

OSHA ACCEPTS EMPLOYEES' WAIVER OF MEDICAL EXAMS FOR RESPIRATORS

Medical exams which assess a worker's ability to wear a respirator may be waived by the employee, it has been determined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The information was contained in a letter from OSHA to the Washington, D.C., law firm of Cushman, Darby and Cushman.

Under OSHA standards for personal protective equipment, the employer is compelled to make medical examinations available to employees whose jobs require them to wear respirators, to provide the respirators and to assure that employees are using them, however, the standards do not require employees to take the medical exams. An employee who waives the exam may still work at a job requiring a respirator, provided he or she wears one, according to OSHA's interpretation of its own rule.

NIOSH CRITERIA DOCUMENT MAINTAINS FEDERAL LIMIT FOR FURFURYL ALCOHOL

In a new criteria document concerning the control of furfuryl alcohol hazards in the workplace, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recommends continuation of the present Federal standard which limits occupational exposure to 200 mg/m³ as a time-weighted average concentration.

The acute hazards associated with furfuryl alcohol include eye, skin, and upper respiratory irritation from direct contact and depression of the central nervous system from inhalation or percutaneous ab-

sorption. Evidence of a chronic effect is not available. Other hazards associated with the compound include combustibility and violent reactivity when mixed with acids. In the criteria document, NIOSH recommends work practices to reduce fire and explosion hazards and to minimize skin contact. A program for medical and environmental surveillance is also included.

NIOSH suggests the following research to correct deficiencies in available information: (a) epidemiologic studies of employees exposed to furfuryl alcohol; (b) animal studies of any chronic effects of furfuryl alcohol, including experimental studies of its possible carcinogenicity; (c) possible effects on reproduction, including whether or not furfuryl alcohol can cause terata or induce mutations; and (d) biotransformation of furfuryl alcohol, its distribution, and elimination.

PARTIAL JUDICIAL STAY OF STANDARD FOR OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE TO LEAD

While most major provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's standard for workplace exposure to inorganic lead became effective March 1, the most costly provisions were stayed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit pending full judicial review of the standard. Lead Industries Association, Inc., one of the petitioners for review of the lead standard, estimates that oral arguments on the petition will be heard in October.

The provisions of the lead standard that have been stayed are as follows:

Paragraph (e)(1) - Methods of compliance/engineering and work practice controls.

Paragraph (e)(3) - Compliance program, except for the paragraph relating to compliance plans for protective clothing, hygiene and housekeeping practices.

Paragraph (e)(4) - Bypass of interim level.

Paragraph (e)(5) - Mechanical ventilation.

Paragraph (e)(6) - Administrative controls.

Other paragraphs are in effect with certain exceptions, as follows:

Paragraph (f) - Respiratory protection, except that the paragraph relating to employee selection of powered, air-purifying respirators (PAPR) is modified so that PAPR's must be provided only when the physical characteristics of the employee are such that the respirators specified elsewhere in the standard are inadequate for the employee's protection.

Paragraph (i) - Hygiene facilities and practices, except that it is stayed to the extent that it requires the construction of new facilities or substantial renovation of existing facilities.

Paragraph (j) - Medical surveillance, except for two provisions that have been stayed: the requirement for ZPP (zinc protoporphyrin) determinations, and the requirement for the multiple physician review mechanism.

The final standard for occupational exposure to lead issued last November called for the principal industries affected by the standard to reach an interim $100 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ level in one to three years of the effective date of the new standard and to reach the final $50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ level in from one to ten years. Now, however, the prior standard of $200 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ as an 8-hour time-weighted average will remain in effect until the complete new standard becomes effective.

NCI REPORT ON CARCINOGENESIS BIOASSAY OF TOXAPHENE

Analysis and evaluation of data from a bioassay of toxaphene has led National Cancer Institute scientists to conclude that under conditions of testing, toxaphene was carcinogenic to male and female mice, causing cancers of the liver. The development of cancerous and noncancerous tumors in the thyroid glands of male and female rats suggested, but did not establish conclusively, that toxaphene was carcinogenic in rats as well. The pathology and tumor incidences were reported as follows: