

August 20, 1941

Mr. M. A. Taylor
Ethyl Gasoline Corporation
Park Square Building
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mat:

We are sending herewith copy of our letter to Mr. Costello regarding [REDACTED]. Will you please keep us advised of the status of this case and if Mr. Riley has any further information about the man, we would appreciate having it.

In answer to the question in your letter of August 4, about the examination of the men engaged in tank cleaning, it is quite agreeable to us for Socony Vacuum to continue the use of the physicians that they are now employing. We do not have any consultant in Boston to whom we would care to refer these men directly. Furthermore, we have not in the past assumed any medical responsibility for men engaged in tank cleaning, either by way of examination by members of our staff or to the extent of recommending specific physicians for the purposes of examination.

We have, however, been willing to cooperate with any physicians employed by the oil companies to the fullest extent and have in the past upon request furnished them with copies of our examination records and corresponded with them as to details of examination.

We are not prepared at the present time to have members of our medical staff conduct any examinations of a routine nature on men engaged in tank cleaning, if indeed such practice were advisable. On the other hand, should question of the possibility of lead poisoning arise in the course of the routine examination by a local physician, we are quite willing to

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correspond or consult with him about the case and if warranted, carry out an examination of the individual in question.

With best regards, I am

Very truly yours,

WM:vr

Willard Machle, M. D.

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August 20, 1941

Mr. J. A. Costello
Ethyl Gasoline Corporation
Chrysler Building
New York, New York

Dear Joe:

In looking over the examination record form used by the Socony Vacuum Oil Company for the examination of men engaged in tank cleaning, we note a point that should be directed to Mr. Maxwell's attention. At the bottom of the examination form is a question, "In your opinion is the employee a good health risk for lead exposure?"

It strikes us that this question has certain implications that are not consistent with the facts, and that may give rise to misunderstandings concerning the actual hazard of tank cleaning as it is properly carried out. I would gather from reading that question that the work is inherently hazardous and will certainly lead to lead exposure. In point of fact, if tank cleaning is properly carried out, the lead exposure to the men is nil or negligible and when properly safeguarded, can be carried out without harm for long periods of time.

Actually, it might be better to say, "Is the employee in good health?" In our experience, chronic lead poisoning of the type that could be determined on periodic examination does not occur among men engaged in tank cleaning. As we conceive of the function of the examinations, they are a procedure by which one selects men in good health for a given job, hoping by means of these examinations to eliminate any workers who might subsequently suffer from illnesses that may be confused with lead intoxication. The routine examinations will not only ascertain that the man maintains a good state of health, but should make certain that no chronic intoxications, as from lead are developing.

With best regards, I am

Very truly yours,

WM:vr

Willard Machle, M. D.