

FILE NAME: Powhatan (PHN)

DATE: 1955

DOC#: PHN013

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Govt Inspection Reports

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
DIVISION OF INDUSTRIAL HEALTH AND AIR POLLUTION
RECORD OF INVESTIGATION OR SERVICE

Date 3/29/55 By ACL E HSE

Plant Powhatan Mining Corporation Industry Asbestos Processing
Area Woodlawn County Baltimore
Address Woodlawn
Number of Employees: Male 11 Female 2 Total 13

Purpose of Visit I.H.
No. Involved

Persons Interviewed

Reason

Self initiated

O.D. Report ☒

Complaint-Request

Management

Labor

Neighbors

Health Office

Other

Survey

Reinspection

Study

Follow-up

Consultation

Special Activity

Project Activity

Occupational Disease

Recommendations Regarding Environmental Problems

Problems	Number Affected	Requested Improvement	Date
<u>New</u>			
Dust - asbestos	11	Program for cleaning respiratory on a weekly basis.	Completed
<u>Past - completed</u>			
Hammering Res #1	9	Improve hatching	Made
Dust - Res #3	9	Repair dust leaks	4/2/55
" - Res #7	8	Control dust a cy lane	"
<u>uncompleted 3</u>			

Field Studies:

Atmospheric Contaminants:

No. involved

Physical Conditions:

Samples submitted for analysis:

File Memo ☒; Plant Record ☐; Letter ☒ rec; Report ☐; Next Visit 9/55
Reviewed 8

On 3/24/55, HSE and BCL visited the plant of the Powhatan Mining Corporation at Woodlawn. The purpose of this visit was to follow up on former recommendations and to reinspect the plant for further health problems. Upon arrival at the plant, we contacted Miss Mett, daughter of the owner of the plant. Miss Mett accompanied us on a tour of the plant and, during this tour, we contacted Mr. Smith, plant foreman. In visiting the plant, various areas in which the Division had made recommendations, were observed for the completion of the work.

Since the last visit of the Division to the plant, a considerable amount of work has been done in the installation of exhaust equipment. New exhaust equipment has been installed in the crude asbestos mill and it was noted that control of dust appeared to be very good. Operations on which the exhaust had been provided were concerned primarily with dumping shoveling operations. The exhaust rate in the takeoff equipment was measured and found to be in the area of 200 linear feet per minute. Control of the dust while operations were being done appeared to be good. We observed workers to be wearing respirators at the time of this visit. The type of respirators used in the mine safety appliance #55 which is approved for all dust, While the workmen were wearing respirators at the time of our visit, we were of the opinion that the use of the respirators might not be consistent at times when inspections are not being made. For instance, it was noted that several of the respirators appeared to be quite new, which indicates that the use of this equipment may not be continuous.

Noted
by DR
31 Jan
62

O.D. The visit was initiated primarily because of the occupational disease report involving Mr. Nathan Porter, deceased. According to the O.D. report, Mr. Porter died of asbestosis. We were informed that Mr. Porter was employed by the Company in 1939 and died in February of 1954. During the period of employment of Mr. Porter, he was engaged in the refined asbestos process. According to our information, Mr. Porter's work consisted of screening the acid washed asbestos. We were advised that the Company had made no chest x-rays of Mr. Porter during the time of his employment. It is the present policy of the Company, however, to have chest x-rays made on all new workers. We were informed that prior to the employment of Mr. Porter that he had been engaged as a stone cutter in a quarry at Granite, Md. It is possible, of course, that Mr. Porter was exposed to silica dust in the stone cutting operation.

Regarding the operations in the refined asbestos process, the Company has made an attempt to eliminate the occurrence of dust in the handling of asbestos in this area. An enclosure has been installed on the screen and exhaust ventilation is applied to this equipment. A velocity study made on the enclosure indicated an exhaust rate of approximately 150 lfm ^{after the face} of the enclosure. The exhaust equipment appeared to be doing a fairly good job in controlling dust. The workman on this operation was wearing a respirator at the time of our visit. The refining of asbestos consists of dumping asbestos out of bags onto a floor and thereafter placing the asbestos in a washer for the removal of dirt and foreign matter. After washing, which is done with water, the asbestos is placed in earthen jars into which muriatic acid is added for further refining of the asbestos. After acidulation, the asbestos is rewashed and placed in a drier in the screen room. Following the drying operation, asbestos is taken to screens where it is collected in boxes and packed into various containers. The majority of this asbestos is packed in one-pound containers and sold to laboratories. A portion of the refined asbestos is packed in drums. The Company has provided a hood for controlling dust in the packing area. At the present time, this hood is portable and is moved about the operation according to the type of material

File Memorandum - Powhatan Mining Corporation (3/24/55)

being packed. It is felt that this hood which is fairly heavy is inconvenient to use and since workmen are prone to disregard control equipment, in such cases, it is felt that it would be advisable for the Company to attempt to make a permanent place for the takeoff hood under which the material could be packed. This was discussed at the time of our visit and Mr. Smith, the plant foreman, agreed that a better location could be provided. This will be pointed out in the letter to the Company following this visit.

mel
47

BCL:gj 4/5/55

April 5, 1955

Mr. Fred A. Mett
Powhatan Mining Company
Woodlawn
Baltimore 7, Maryland

Dear Mr. Mett:

On March 24, 1955, Messrs. Honorato Schaves and Mel Lucas, Division Engineers visited your plant. The purpose of this visit was to investigate the reported death of Mr. Nathan Porter from asbestosis, and also to follow up on recommendations which this Division has made for controlling the exposure of plant workers to asbestos dust. During this visit, Miss Mett and Mr. Smith were contacted. The period of employment of Mr. Porter and the type of work performed by him was described to the Division representatives. The death of Mr. Porter certainly emphasizes the need for protecting workers from asbestos dust. During this visit, it was observed that you have made important improvements in protecting workers' health in this regard.

The provision of respirators for the workers is certainly an important part of the control program. While the Division does not in general approve of the use of respiratory devices throughout the work shift, it is nevertheless important that until such test can be made to show that the exposure is controlled, the use of the respiratory equipment should be continued.

Installation of exhaust equipment in the grinding plant is an important step forward in dust control in this operation. Exhaust tests were made with a velometer at the face of the takeoff enclosures and the average takeoff rate was 150 to 200 ft. per minute at the locations. The wheelbarrow dumping station appeared to be very good. The exhaust systems should not, however, control dust occurring from shoveling and otherwise handling asbestos prior to placing in the processing equipment. Therefore, the only logical method of preventing overexposure to the dust is by use of respirators, as done at the present time. It must be emphasized that the supervisor make frequent contact with workmen in regard to the wearing of respirators.

4/5/55

The Division recommends that consideration be given to periodic cleaning of the respirators in order that they do not become fouled and unfit for use. It is suggested that the respirators be collected weekly and be carefully washed in soap and water and returned to the workers. New filters should be placed in the respirators at the time of cleaning, or oftener if required.

If we can be of service to you in matters concerning the health of your workers, please do not hesitate to call on us at any time.

Very truly yours,

Wm. F. Reindollar, Sc. D., Chief
Division of Industrial Health
and Air Pollution

WFR:BCL:gj