

291 file
Kettering Laboratory of
Applied Physiology
College of Medicine
Eden Avenue
Cincinnati, 19, Ohio
cc/ Miss Fortlage,
✓ (same address as above)

17

September 30, 1943

Mr. Charles E. Baxter
Coldbrook Post Office
Saint John, N. B.
Canada

Dear Mr. Baxter:

Your letter of September 7th has come to my attention and I am glad to give you the information which you request.

You need not be concerned about any poisonous effects resulting from the handling of gasoline containing tetraethyl lead or from exposure to the vapors given off by such gasoline under the ordinary conditions of handling. This matter has been investigated carefully over a period of many years during which no cases of poisoning or of other injurious effects have been found in the case of men who have handled the product daily. We have always advised that men working with this gasoline should handle it with care and should avoid contact of their skin with it as far as possible. This is not so much because of any danger of lead poisoning as because gasoline is injurious to the skin. Some persons develop skin difficulties which cause them a great deal of discomfort and inconvenience. There are very few such cases, however, and in general, all that happens is that the skin of the hands, if bathed in gasoline frequently, becomes dry, scaly and often cracked. Under these conditions, skin infections are quite common and sometimes are difficult to treat.

If you should be disturbed with such a condition at present, it would be wise for you to see a doctor and obtain an ointment for the treatment of your skin. In addition, you should avoid contact with gasoline with great care regardless of whether or not it is gasoline containing lead.

You mention the matter of cleaning a tank. Therefore, I should warn you that it is necessary to be quite careful to avoid exposure to gasoline in connection with such work. If the tank is a small one which does not have to be entered, the dangers are slight. However, as you probably know, going inside a tank that has contained gasoline is extremely dangerous since the gasoline vapors may produce drunkenness and unconsciousness. Under these conditions, there may also be significant lead exposure and therefore the person entering the tank must be protected by an airline mask against inhalation of either gasoline or lead.

I believe this covers the situation, but if there are any further questions that are disturbing you, I shall be pleased to answer them.

Very truly yours,

RE 0016243

R. A. Kehoe,
Medical Director,
Ethyl Corporation