

March 24, 1945

Mr. J. H. Schaefer,
Ethyl Corporation,
Chrysler Building,
New York City 17.

Dear John:

I shall be seeing you next week, but I hasten to comment on one paragraph in your letter of March 21, to the effect that the hazard of exposure to organic lead compounds "has been sufficiently reduced that it does no longer remain as a significant hazard."

I should not want you or anyone else to arrive at that conclusion from what I have said. The hazards of exposure to tetraethyl lead are still greater than they should be, and the day to day risk in relation to leakage, slight operating failures and the like is a significant matter. If there should be the slightest relaxation of present precautionary measures, we could easily be back where we were months ago, in a short time. Present precautions and present attention to maintenance has reduced the hazard to the point where we are not in constant fear of the outbreak of acute intoxication among the personnel. However, this is still a significant hazard and it will continue as such in my opinion, until there are certain more or less fundamental improvements in either operating equipment or operating procedures. In other words, in my opinion, it takes undue skill and attention to maintain the safety of these operations. The potential risk should be reduced by some means so as to bring the hazards to a point where they will be controlled by somewhat less heroic, and therefore more readily practicable measures.

I do not wonder that you queried the last sentence of the report. What I should have referred to was the last quarter of the year 1944 in relation to the worst period of the year 1943. That is to say, our last series of results give no evidence of improvement in the situation referred to in my voluminous report for the period of the year ending with 1943.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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ETHYL CORPORATION

MANUFACTURING AND TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT

March 21, 1945

PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY TO
CHRYSLER BUILDING
405 LEXINGTON AVE., NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dr. R. A. Kehoe, M.D.
College of Medicine
University of Cincinnati
Eden & Bethesda Avenues
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Bob:

Thank you for your letter of March 19th in reference to your last trip to the Chambers Works area. I appreciate your taking me into your confidence on this subject, and I believe that at the opportune time I will be able to assist in corrective measures on the points you have raised.

Commenting somewhat in detail on your memorandum, I submit the following.

I would conclude that the Chambers Works' organic lead hazard has been sufficiently reduced and that it does no longer remain as a significant hazard. On the other hand, the dust problem, in organic lead, remains acute. Perhaps in this respect, we may be able to do something through our own channels at Deepwater to quietly ascertain how the Industrial Engineering Department's plans for dust control are progressing. I think I can have something on this shortly. Certainly the Industrial Engineering Department might spend more profitable time on such a problem and defer other so-called MXs (Experimental Projects), such as Automatic Caster Control, Magnetic Operation of Angle Valves, Cyclone Separators, etc.

Also through our own channels, I have put pressure on improvement in the bulk storage area in which we share operating responsibility, and I am sure this part of the program will receive special attention as far as our own direct efforts are concerned. We can also assist in improving the dust situation in the blender. On my trip to Baton Rouge the first part of April when I am with Mr. Stecher, I can probably work in the other matters, feeling that this occasion would be the opportune time.

March 21, 1945

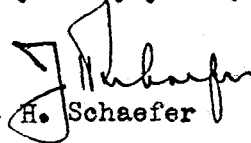
In general, it is my own opinion, and may I say my own observation, that some of the poor practices at Chambers Works have been the result of supervision. I think you now know that both Messrs. Heuser and Duke are no longer the responsible operating supervision and Dr. Plunkett and Mr. Hodges have taken their place. I think, therefore, the supervision has a chance of being improved as the latter two men, in my opinion, are superior supervision. Quite frankly for your own confidential information, I brought this matter of supervision up to the very top Orchem Management at the time we discussed the whole hygienic situation, which was during the time cases of sickness were prevalent. I have a feeling that the change in top supervision will bolster and inspire the whole supervisory group, and we can reasonably anticipate improvement.

With respect to the glove situation, here again we seem to get involved in red tape. Dr. Calingaert has worked out, in my opinion, some very good gloves for special applications, but there has been too much time consumed in Chambers Works' tests to give approval for the use of these gloves in the area. Nevertheless, I will use my best efforts to improve the situation.

You may expect to hear from me further on this matter as soon as I have more opportunity to do something about it.

With reference to Page 5 of your report, the last sentence on the page, is not clear to me. Do you mean the last quarter of 1944 instead of 1945 comparable to the whole period of 1944?

Very truly yours,


J. H. Schaefer

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