D.N.CO.

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO J. H. Walton
AT 1586 KB

DATE August 18, 1972
FROM A. J. Trommershausen

COPIES TO D. R. Canham
P. J. Franklin
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AT 2675 OB

SUBJECT Asbestos Sampling - Seattle

On August 2, 1972, a visit was made to the Seattle Gypsum plant, to assess the asbestos exposure in the accessories plant which produces mortars containing asbestos.

Approximately 20-30 bags of asbestos (100 lbs. each) are used per day. The bags are cut open and dumped into hoppers which have local exhaust ventilation. From an engineering viewpoint, the hooding could be improved, but it appeared to be working effectively because of the high rate of air being exhausted.

Samples were taken by standard methods using personal samplers at a rate of two liters per minute.

The results of the tests, which were analyzed by the School of Public Health at the University of California in Berkeley, are as follows:

Sample No.	Operator	Volume Sampled (liters)	Fibers/ml
1S	C. Hammon	52	3.6
2S	R. Hansen	81	2.9
3S	C. Hammon	54	3.8

The values found were below the present threshold limit value of 5 fibers/ml.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Respiratory Protection

Maintain present practice of wearing masks or respirators when handling asbestos.

2. Protective Clothing

The regulations specify special clothes, change rooms and double lockers when airborne asbestos fibers exceed the limits. We seem to be in compliance with the time-weighted average, and at this time a protective clothing program is not indicated. However, this matter should be left open and studied further.

One reason for the change in clothing requirement is to prevent the workmen from taking asbestos contaminated clothing home to their families. Consequently, steps should be taken to avoid accidents and poor work practices which would cause excessive asbestos dusts in the workers' clothing.

3. Spills and Clean-up

A vacuum cleaner is presently used for cleaning up spills. The material emptied from the vacuum cleaner should be placed in plastic bags, tied, labeled and buried.

Serious consideration should be given to purchasing bagged asbestos on pallets which are encapsulated in "shrink" plastic. This would significantly reduce the problem of broken bags. Also, inquiries should be made as to the availability of 50-lb. bags. A small quantity of 50-lb. bags would substantially reduce the problems of "splitting" the 100-lb. bags.

4. Empty Bag Disposal

The empty asbestos bags can be disposed of most simply by placing them near the middle of the compactor; i.e., they should not be placed on the top or bottom of the pile. (Plastic bags are probably not necessary, and they would probably break under compaction anyway.) The resultant stack should be labeled and, in addition, the scavenger company should be advised of the presence of asbestos.

5. Sign

A warning sign should be posted according to the regulations - paragraph 1910.93a(g)(1).

6. Recordkeeping

Exposure records must be maintained for three years and made available to the workmen. Also, in addition, notification in writing must be made to the employee when the exposures exceed the limits. In the present case, exposures should be noted in personnel files, but formal notification is unnecessary, although oral discussions are recommended.

7. Medical Examinations

Special medical examinations for those exposed to asbestos will need to be implemented before the end of the year. My interpretation of "exposed" is that this would apply to those unloading asbestos, dumping bags and disposing of bags. Ideally, this all could be done by the same two men.

Physical examinations can be done by Doctor Barr. I will make the final arrangements and coordinate with all concerned after an appropriate pulmonary history questionnaire has been obtained.

8. Ventilation

While the local exhaust ventilation system seemed to be working satisfactorily, an improvement could easily be made by simple hood revisions to bring the points of entry nearer to the bags. The smaller hopper at the floor level should be made larger to accommodate the large 100-lb. bags; the bags are bigger than the hopper.

Housekeeping in the accessories plant was good, and the workers and supervisors are well aware of the hazards of asbestos.

The assistance of Bob Bridges during the survey was appreciated.

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