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1961 death at Goodyear resembled cancer here

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A chemical worker at the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. plant in Niagara Falls, N. Y., died in 1961 of a rare form of cancer of the liver similar to the cancer that killed at least five B. F. Goodrich Co. employes in Louisville.

Goodyear today confirmed a check of its medical records uncovered the death from hemangioendothelioma, a relatively rare cancer of the liver. The company noted that medical authorities consider it to be similar to angiosarcoma. At least five Goodrich employes have succumbed to angiosarcoma and a sixth is hospitalized with it.

The Louisville deaths of workers exposed to vinyl and polyvinyl chloride—two chemicals basic to the plastics industry—have sparked an international investigation of a possible link between the chemicals and liver diseases.

Earlier this week Goodyear acknowledged that the initial review of its Niagara Falls health records had revealed a 1970 death from a hematoma, or malignant cancer, of the liver cells and two cases of cirrhosis of the liver, one of which had proved fatal to a polyvinyl-chloride worker in 1968. At that time, Goodyear said its investigation was continuing.

The 1951 death was of a chemical operator in a vinyl-chloride processing area who had ben exposed to the chemical for 15 years.

The 1971 death is also the earliest now under investigation for apossible link with the worker's exposure to the chemicals. The five know BFG deaths occurred between 1964 and last December and the first three were reported by the company in late January

A meeting has been scheduled tomorrow in Washington at which medical authorities will attempt to establish a better set of procedures for earlier detection to liver problems among vinyl- and polyvinyl-chloride workers. Another group of medical experts will be meeting with officials of the Center for Disease control and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Dr. Joseph Wagoner, director of field studies and clinical investigations for the National Institute, said the investigators haven't ruled out the possibility that other diseases caused by the exposure to the chemicals involved in the manufacturing process may be found.

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