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NEWSLETTER

Attached is my summary of what handlers, manufacturers and fabricators of asbestos fibres and asbestos products should be aware of concerning asbestos and health. I am distributing this summary for the benefit of those who might be confused, anxious and indecisive due to the barrage of exaggerated asbestos hazard claims by reporters and politicians over the past ten years.

A. H. Bagenstose
Vice President - Marketing & Sales

AHB/cb

Attachment

ASBESTOS AND HEALTH

HOW DANGEROUS IS ASBESTOS?

Statistics show that workers who smoke and work in high levels of asbestos dust have greater incidences of asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. Statistics also show that workers who have never smoked regularly or worked only where asbestos dust levels are low have no greater frequency of asbestos-related diseases than the non-smoking general population. If dust levels in work areas are controlled within safe limits asbestos will not be a hazard to personnel.

WHEN SHOULD CAUTION LABELS BE APPLIED TO PRODUCTS?

Most asbestos fibre containing products are completely safe because the fibres are locked in with binders. Only when such products are machined or fabricated should precautions be taken. Those other products which may release asbestos fibres into the air during handling, application, etc. should have caution labels applied.

WHAT SHOULD EMPLOYERS BE DOING TO PROVIDE HEALTH PROTECTION FOR EMPLOYEES

Employers of asbestos industry workers should do the following to safeguard their employees and to comply with the laws of many countries:

- 1) Provide a safe working environment by keeping levels of asbestos fibres below permissible limits;
- 2) While corrective measures are being taken employees should be protected by other means such as the wearing of an approved respirator and/or shift rotation. These should be considered only as temporary or emergency measures;
- 3) Monitor the air periodically to determine dust level;
- 4) Post warning signs in work areas where asbestos is used, when special precautions should be observed, when respiratory equipment should be used, etc.;
- 5) Provide pre-employment, annual and termination medical examinations and check-ups for all employees exposed to asbestos dust;
- 6) Provide showering and change of clothes area so asbestos is not carried out of the area;
- 7) Educate employees concerning possible hazards of asbestos, and on how to avoid them. Encourage employees' cooperation for safety of their health;
- 8) Practice good housekeeping. Use vacuum type cleaner to clean up spilled asbestos fibre. Do not sweep or broom.

Most employers around the world are now practicing the above safety and good housekeeping methods. The adaptation of proper practices are not all that difficult as they may first appear.

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