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CENTRAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

HASKELL LABORATORY

FOR

TOXICOLOGY AND INDUSTRIAL MEDICINE

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FROM: S. W. DIXON

RESPIRATORS FOR ASBESTOS CONTAINING DUST

I have contacted the following respirator suppliers concerning adequate respirators for asbestos containing dust. Their comments are summarized below.

Mine Safety Appliance Company - Wade Miller.  
American Optical - Earl Shoub.  
3M Company - Ron King.

- They have no plans to issue a warning letter or label on respirators cautioning against use for asbestos containing dust such as Norton has done.
- They would not recommend against using any respirator for protection against asbestos containing dust which has current NIOSH approval. However, American Optical cautions that the user should be aware of the recent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission ruling on the Anaconda Aluminum Case which may require use of a Type "C" supplied-air respirator for certain activities per 29 CFR 1910.1001 (c) (2) (iii). Though Johns Mansville has appealed this ruling to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, this ruling is currently enforceable.

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- The high efficiency filters (Type "H") Norton recommends (7580, 7680) are not currently NIOSH approved for asbestos containing dust. However, MSA has received letters from OSHA and NIOSH saying that it is permissible to use Type "H" filters for asbestos.
- None of the suppliers have had testing done for efficiency of their filters for asbestos dust specifically. However, they contend that it is easier to filter asbestos than the 0.4 - 0.6  $\mu$ m silica dust which NIOSH has used to test their respirators, due to asbestos fiber geometry.
- American Optical's disposable R1050 respirator which currently has approval for pneumoconiosis and fibrosis producing dusts and mists is currently being submitted for Type "H" and Type "A" (asbestos) approval. NIOSH's response will be revealing.

SWD/dar

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