BCC Richard Davis - GO

January 24, 1961

Mr. Paul Prozeller
Assistant Chief Engineer
Pittsburgh Metallurgical Company
Calvert City, Kentucky

Dear Mr. Prozeller:

I have been told that recently at your plant a hydraulic line containing Pydraul A-200 ruptured with the result that the fluid was discharged on hot metal. I understand that the workmen complained of the unpleasantness of the decomposition products.

Our animal toxicity data and plant experience reports indicate that exposure to the decomposition products of the Pydraul fluids does not present a serious hazard even though such decomposition products cannot be said to be non-toxic. The data and experience do show that there should be no serious illness or systemic injury from the brief exposures that men might experience during the period that would be necessary to shut off equipment following a line rupture and leave the area until ventilation can reduce the concentration of the decomposition products. Obviously, if workmen must go back into heavy concentrations of the decomposition products, respiratory protective devices should be worn. The data indicates, however, that although there will be discomfort including irritation of the respiratory tract and possibly of the eyes, men will not suffer serious consequences from any exposures which they can tolerate for short periods.

The decomposition products include hydrochloric acid vapors and phenolics which result in the irritation and discomfort referred to above. In animal experiments, the concentrations of these decomposition products were not significantly more toxic than the decomposition products when petroleum base fluids were tested under as nearly similar conditions as possible.

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If I can be of any further assistance to you, please let me know.

Very truly yours,

R. Emmet Kelly, M.D.
Medical Director

REK:dh

cc Mr. James D. Wright
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