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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Memo from Wilson to Firestone CEO Cairns RE Decatur plant visit by URW Safety Specialist [Ex. 896]

B.C. Notes - 11-12-73 Wilson 7-pp memo to Firestone CEO Cairns describing Decatur plant visit by URW Safety Specialist Lou Beliczky, who was critical of management, finding numerous health and safety hazards

Firestone

INTEROFFICE

0566

NOVEMBER 12, 1973

TO MR. J. V. CAIRNS

FROM G. L. WILSON

REFERRING TO LETTER OF

SUBJECT

DECATUR VISIT BY L. BELICZKY

On November 9, 1973, Mr. Beliczky visited the Decatur plant. The visit started with a meeting attended by all members of the local safety committee, Mr. H. G. Cantrell, and the undersigned.

Following are Mr. Beliczky's comments. Items in parentheses are by the undersigned.

1. Initial Meeting

Mr. Beliczky stated that the attitude of management is poor, there is a lack of enthusiasm for safety, and that management does not encourage cooperation with the joint committee.

He raised questions about follow-up periodic examinations for employees on noisy jobs and questioned the status of periodic health examinations. (I commented that Mr. Howard, the Safety Engineer, is presently working on the item of periodic health examination follow-up.)

The union is not notified of Industrial Hygiene and Safety visits by company personnel. They should be notified of the results of such audits, but this does not mean that the union is to get a copy of reports. It was recommended that the Industrial Hygienist talk to the union people during visits and inform them.

Beliczky reported on a questionnaire which the union had just filled out. (This was the questionnaire of 5-3-71, but the answers were as of 11-9-73.) The union's answers to the questionnaire indicated that there was more lip service than anything else and pointed out that their problems included heat, noise, dust, solvent vapors, and radiation.

It was implied that the plant physician has a poor attitude. (When I questioned him and asked for an elaboration of this statement, Beliczky declined saying that he would take it up through other channels.)

There may be nurses on duty on weekends when 60% of the plant population is working. (Mr. Cantrell responded that the percentage was less than this, but I do not remember the figures he used.)

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It was stated that it takes from 30-90 minutes to get an injured employee to the hospital, that it is usually necessary to call a taxi to transport patients to the hospital.

Beliczky pointed out the necessity for having trained first-aid people available when no nurse is available.

The attitude of the nurses is poor. They are not people oriented. One instance was claimed wherein the nurse told a man with a bad ankle that he was faking and that he should go back to work.

The question of mill rescue equipment and mill drills was mentioned. There is a need for rescue drills, a need to check the safety condition of mills and calenders at the start of the shift. The plant manager is responsible for this and all other safety conditions. (Mr. Howard pointed out that mill rescue equipment is on order and in the process of being delivered.)

It was claimed that there has been one banbury operator with a throat problem. There had been four cases of dermatitis involving Code 404 and RP-775. There were two cases of dermatitis in white wall mixing, one of which was two years ago and the other one year ago. A man was discharged during his probationary period for a skin reaction. This was the only reason. He had an exceptional record. Supervisors recommended him favorably. This was about a year ago.

Mr. Beliczky asked that a camera be used during the plant tour so as to illustrate unsafe items seen. I agreed that Mr. Howard would use a Polaroid camera, but that the prints would remain in the plant. This was agreeable.

The initial meeting then adjourned.

2. Following a plant tour of portions of the plant, another meeting was convened. In addition to those mentioned above, the plant manager was present.

The first items for discussion were based on the pictures which were taken.

- a. This was a picture showing poor electrical maintenance
- b. Some skids were in the aisle in the calender room.
- c. Skids in aisle in mill room.

- d. This was a picture of the WSW mix mill area. Codes 54 and 466 in addition to titanium dioxide are mill mixed. The face velocity of the hood over the mill was satisfactory, but some dust escaped behind the mill. (There had been a complaint by a workman in the aisle about 20 feet beyond the back of the mill.)
- e. In the compound area, a drum of resin was chopped open with an axe, lifted about 20 feet high on a fork lift and dropped to the floor to burst it open. This is an unsafe procedure.
- f. The ventilation system is a good approach to control of dust. (This is a new system just being completed and very effectively controls pigment dusts.)
- g. No chain guards were in place on the mezzanine at the top of the pigment bins.
- h. Two new hoods are in place near the wall in the compound area for weighing small quantities of pigments including Code 404 and RP-775. There is hand contact with these materials. Some minor changes in the ventilation are needed to make it more effective. (I pointed out to the department manager that both Code 404 and RP-775 must be kept off the skin. I also mentioned to the Safety Department that there are writeups in the Safety Manual pointing out the hazards of these two materials, that both are skin sensitizers and that Code 404 will cause skin problems in a large percentage of people having contact with it.)
- i. An emergency shower pull cord was not readily available
- j. A conduit box was open.
- k. A canopy hood over the pellet dump area of 27-0 banbury was not capturing all the dust generated when pellets were dumped. (The department manager indicated that there was some malfunction in this system and that changes were on order.)
- l. There was a leak of carbon black at the rear of 27-0 banbury.
- m. There was no exhaust ventilation for pigment weighing at 11-2 banbury. Beliczky prefers to see ventilation at such installations.

- n. There were a number of racks collapsed in a high bay area.
 - o. A fire door between shipping and HD finishing was blocked. (There were a number of cartons stored against the door on the shipping side.)
 - p. The fire extinguisher was not readily available at No. 9 steel cutter.
 - q. Some very high racks of stacked tires in the warehouse were leaning and could fall.
 - r. There was no exhaust ventilation where pigments are weighed in the cement house. Since this is performed for 1/2 hour per day at most, the man should be provided a respirator.
3. Mr. Beliczky indicated that the small number of photographs may be significant as he usually ends up with 40-50 of them.

Beliczky had some comments in addition to those above which were based on the photographs.

- a. A horn on a lift truck was not loud enough to be heard.
- b. The operator of the west WSW mill stated that it required about 100 pound pull on the safety rope. This should be checked out. (No one knew whether this is covered by regulation.)
- c. A curtain on the back of the WSW mix mill would increase its efficiency. (I agree.)
- d. The matter of skin contact with Code 404 and RP-775 were mentioned again.
- e. It was stated that non-solvent base hand cleaner should be used. (I commented upon the availability of the tire builder's hand cream and that if the plant wishes to purchase this Firestone item, it could be ordered from Plant II in Akron. Alternatively, the plant can obtain the formula from Technical in Akron and manufacture it.)
- f. The paint mixing hood in the cement house needs some modification by lowering the top of the front of the hood so as to increase face velocity.

- g. No face velocity could be detected at the hood for the day mixer in the cement house.
- h. The system of grounding drums in the cement house is good but grounding should be checked periodically with an instrument.
- i. Housekeeping was poor near one mixing drum in the cement house. (This area was badly contaminated with dried cement caused by the arrangement for pumping cement to the tube lines. According to the department manager, changes are under way.)
- j. Housekeeping in the compound room was poor. (Bags of pigments have been used in front of the loading doors on the mezzanine as a platform for dumping pigments into the bins. According to the department manager, these are to be replaced with wooden platforms. The housekeeping was very bad in this area.)
- k. There was oil on the floor at the level below the first floor under the 4-roll steel calender.
- l. Housekeeping was poor in the RFL dip room. The belt from the fan to the motor intended to ventilate the small steel room where formaldehyde is pumped was missing. There were skids stored under the emergency shower in this room. The eye fountain needed adjustment to increase the water flow.
- m. There was no measurable ventilation at the face of the enclosure on the 10-10 tuber.
- n. Except for the item noted in 2 (k) above, the ventilation on 27 banbury was OK.
- o. The ventilation on 11-1 and 11-2 banburys was good. A side panel on 11-2 will improve it further.
- p. Banbury 11-3 ventilation system was moving enough air, but the distribution was not good. There was not enough air movement at the belt area where pigments are dumped. (Some additional enclosure will improve this.)
- q. It was emphasized that curtains must be used around welding operations to prevent flash burns. (Welding areas were not inspected.)
- r. Temperature measurements need to be made in the flat press area. (I pointed out that we had done this in all areas of all plants last summer.)

- s. There was evidence of dust leaking from cabinets where glass beads are used for mold cleaning. This is a nuisance dust and there is no systemic toxicity.
 - t. Noise level of 94 dBA at booker and paint stations of 10-10 tuber. In white sidewall mill area, the noise was 86 except that it rose to 92 dBA when the banbury drying conveyor came on. At the desk in final inspection, it was 90 dBA. At a digging station, the noise level was 96 from the buffing operation and rose to 102 dBA when the air gun was used. In the buffing area, it was 94-96 at minor buffing.
 - u. Some plant air lines were over 30 psi pressure.
 - v. The union members of the safety committee now understand the necessity for use of ear protection as an interim measure where noise is excessive.
 - w. The ventilation design in minor buffing is not good. (This system is just being installed. I agree that the vent opening is so far away from the actual buffing operation that the ventilation will probably be ineffective.)
 - x. On a heavy duty tire building machine, the operator cannot reach the safety rope from his normal work station.
4. It was stated that basically there is no urgent action needed insofar as Industrial Hygiene is concerned. There are not too many problems. The banbury operation is generally good.

There are a lot of small safety items that need attention.

The main reason for this visit is that the safety committee feels that its efforts are in vain. There is lack of support from management. Only Mr. Burton generally attended safety committee meetings. Production comes first. There was no assistance from the Safety Department. Mr. Burton often stated "We'll correct it later" or "We'll write a work order".

There was oil on the floor at a break area in shipping. There was also a need for general improvement in the shipping area (housekeeping).

Priorities should be established and target dates set. The company "tolerates" the safety committee. This is the plant manager's responsibility.

The medical people are less "people oriented" than they should be. It takes too long to get a man to the hospital, for example, 1/2 - 1 1/2 hours.

There is need for a positive action program on mill drills and checking the presence of emergency tools. (Mr. McVay, the Production Manager, spoke about a movie on mill drills he had seen in the Firestone plant in Sweden. He was very impressed with this movie and Decatur has a copy of it. Mr. Beliczky indicated an interest in seeing it.


CORPORATE INDUSTRIAL HYGIENIST

GLW:da

cc: Dr. L. H. Ballou
Mr. G. D. Cross
Mr. T. I. Velock
Mr. J. H. Sperr