VC READ FILE

The technical amendment to the final rule appears in the Full Text section of this issue.

Chart Revision

OSHA began revising the charts in 1986 to provide a more up-to-date listing of acceptable combinations of multi-piece components. In addition, the charts identify wheel components that no longer are manufactured. Information relating to the safe servicing of single-piece rim wheels, previously contained only in manuals, now is included on the charts.

The charts also include information from the standard to "provide a more comprehensive document for the employer and employee to use in their servicing operations," the agency said.

Current NHSTA charts and other relevant publications and manuals will continue to be acceptable, the agency said.

Copies of the revised charts may be obtained from the OSHA Publications Office, U.S. Department of Labor, Room N-3101, 200 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210; (202) 523-9667.

For further information, contact James F. Foster, OSHA Office of Information, Room N-3647, at the same address; (202) 523-8148.

Display Terminals

SECOND TOWN EXEMPTS LOCAL BUSINESSES FROM SUFFOLK COUNTY SAFETY, HEALTH VDT LAW

A second town in Suffolk County, N.Y., has voted to exempt employers within its boundaries from coverage under a recently passed county law regulating the use of video display terminals, contending that the law puts unfair economic burdens on local businesses.

The town, Southold, voted Aug. 9 to exempt itself from the county VDT legislation. The first town to do so was Brookhaven, Suffolk County's largest town (18 OSHR 663). The county has 10 towns, and currently four other towns—Babylon, Smithtown, Islip, and Riverhead—also are considering similar resolutions, according to Valerie Scibilia, a spokeswoman for the Long Island Association, a local business coalition.

The Suffolk County VDT legislation applies to businesses with 20 or more VDTs, employing operators who spend at least 26 hours a week on the units, and requires those employers to provide ergonomically designed work stations, safety-related training and education, and eye-care benefits (18 OSHR 92).

'Home-Rule' Provision

Lisa Reardon, an official with the Communication Workers of America, told BNA Sept. 12 that county attorneys have told her the towns' actions are totally illegal." But she said the union will probably not act to try to change the towns' positions unless the town councils try to interfere with businesses complying with the law. The county law requires employers to offer health education programs and 15-minute breaks to VDT workers starting in January 1989.

Ruthanne Woodhull, assistant to Southold Town Supervisor Frank Murphy, told BNA Sept. 8 the town council voted unanimously to exempt local employers from compliance with the county law on the basis that the town's "home-rule powers" predate the county's charter, thereby making the county law non-binding on the town.

Other objections to the resolution are that no medical evidence exists to prove that VDTs cause adverse health effects, that the county law conflicts with labor contracts, that the county law pre-empts labor negotiations, and that the county law provides a major obstacle to developing non-polluting industries in the town. Town residents "rely on jobs with computer technology" in businesses that are threatened by the county VDT law, according to Woodhull.

Scibilia said that Southold's action "adds to the confusion" on the question of what level of government has jurisdiction to regulate VDTs. LIA contends that the legislation should come from the state or federal legislatures, so all counties in a state would be required to follow the same restrictions and provisions.

Health Hazards

'COSTLY' OUTBREAK OF MUMPS AMONG EMPLOYEES AT CHICAGO EXCHANGE NOTED IN REPORT BY CDC

Employees at three futures exchanges in Chicago faced two unusual job-related stresses last fall, according to a report published Sept. 9 by the Centers for Disease Control: the stock market plummet in mid-October and an outbreak of mumps that occurred over a four-month period between August and December.

The outbreak, which CDC linked to close contact between employees on the trading floors of the exchanges, had "costly" results in terms of expenses for hospitalization, medication, and visits to the doctor, according to the report, published in the centers' *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

In all, 116 employees came down with the disease, three more cases occurred in family members, complications developed in 21 instances, and nine persons were hospitalized, CDC said.

Closed environments like the trading floors make the transmission of infectious diseases easier, the report noted. It also said that the number of cases of mumps at the three exchanges peaked during the surge of trading activity that preceded the Oct. 19 market decline.

From interviews with some of the patients, it appeared that the "intense activity" during that period may have "encouraged" some employees to continue working even though they were sick—"thus possibly exposing susceptible co-workers," CDC said.

The report compared the cost of each case of mumps, nearly $1,500, with the $5 to $9 that it costs to be immunized against the disease.

CDC said that the outbreak should remind persons of the need to have documented immunity to mumps, and the need for employers and health-care providers to be aware that mumps may occur in adults as well as children.

Vinyl Chloride

UPDATED STUDY FINDS LOW CANCER RATES AMONG WORKERS PREVIOUSLY SEEN AS HIGH-RISK

An updated study of workers potentially exposed to vinyl chloride at a Dow Chemical Co. plant demonstrated that an earlier finding of an increased risk of all cancer types did not apply over the long run.

In addition, statistically significant excesses of specific types of cancer sometimes associated with vinyl chloride exposure were not found, according to the update published in the August *Journal of Occupational Medicine*.

The earlier detection of higher-than-expected cancer rates among workers potentially exposed to high levels of the chemical—200 parts per million or more—was attributed to

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a "chance finding" and may not reflect effects from vinyl chloride exposures, Gregory G. Bond, technical coordinator of Dow's epidemiology department and co-author of the update, told BNA Sept. 12.

When researchers followed worker medical histories for an additional nine years, they found fewer deaths than expected from cancer, overall, for the cumulative 40-year period, according to the study update.

Although he did not expect the update to have any specific impact on public policy, Bond said that it "may offer some answers to the question of whether vinyl chloride can cause cancer at other sites [in the body]" apart from those already associated with the chemical, in future regulatory proceedings.

Vinyl chloride is a known human carcinogen and has been associated with an increased risk of angiosarcoma of the liver among workers exposed to high levels of the chemical, Bond told BNA Sept. 12.

Under a 1975 standard, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires that exposures to vinyl chloride not exceed 1 part per million over an eight-hour work shift (Reference File, 31: 8321).

Commitment To Employees

Dow conducted the update as part of an effort to "assure ourselves and our employees" that no increased risk of angiosarcoma of the liver has been observed among Dow workers exposed to vinyl chloride, according to Bond.

The company also updated its information to investigate further the earlier finding of a higher incidence of cancer at all body sites among workers with a higher potential for exposure, the Dow health scientist stated.

Researchers looked at 593 Dow Michigan Division employees potentially exposed to vinyl chloride who were previously studied from 1942 to 1973. The update followed those employees and their medical histories through 1982.

Primary focus of the study were health effects such as emphysema and cancers of the biliary tract, lung, brain, and liver—including angiosarcoma.

The results reinforced findings of the original 1975 study that there was no dominant tumor site or a unique cancer type among this subgroup, "weakening any interpretation of a causal link with vinyl chloride," according to the published update.

Further Findings

Researchers found one death from liver cancer where 0.6 deaths were expected.

The update also found that although there were two deaths from brain cancer during the nine-year follow-up period compared with one death expected, one of the deaths occurred less than five years after the worker's first exposure to vinyl chloride. Both deceased workers received only short-term exposures to the chemical in job categories estimated to receive exposures of less than 200 ppm over an eight-hour shift.

The update also reported six deaths from emphysema or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease compared with five expected deaths in a population of that size. None of the six, however, worked in areas with a potential for exposure to polyvinyl chloride dust, the authors said.

Researchers failed to find an increased risk of lung cancer, a finding consistent with that of the "majority" of other vinyl chloride studies, according to the update report.

In addition to Bond, the study update was conducted by five other Dow health scientists: Wendy S. Dahar, Elsie A. McLaren, Fred L. Sabel, Thomas E. Lipps, and Ralph R. Cook.

California

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED TO STATE RULES COVERING ASBESTOS REMOVAL CONTRACTORS

SAN FRANCISCO—(By a BNA Staff Correspondent)—Several amendments to California regulations governing asbestos removal contractors were proposed by the state Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), including one proposing a tenfold increase in the fee charged by the division to register contractors.

Besides the increase in the registration fee, the division is proposing to allow oral, in addition to written, pre-job notifications, clarify who must register, and exempt certain contractors from a certification requirement.

California law requires employers engaged in asbestos-related work to register with the division and to notify DOSH before they begin work on a project involving asbestos. The current registration fee is $30, but DOSH is proposing to raise that to $350 because it has been unable to recover its costs of managing the registration program with the lower fee. Renewals of registrations would cost $150, under the proposed amendments.

Section 341.9 of the division's regulations already requires employers that have registered with DOSH to provide written, pre-job notifications when they engage in asbestos-related work. DOSH is proposing to amend that section to allow for oral notification in some instances, such as emergencies during non-business hours requiring immediate action.

Compute On Per-Job Basis

Currently, employers that engage in asbestos-related work involving 100 square feet or more of asbestos-containing material are subject to the registration requirement. DOSH proposed to clarify the 100-square-foot limitation to compute it on a per-job basis, rather than as the total square footage handled on separate jobs throughout the year.

Contractors that install, maintain, and repair asbestos cement pipe or sheets, vinyl asbestos flooring, or asbestos bituminous or resinous materials already are exempted by state law from a requirement that they pass an asbestos certification examination. DOSH is proposing in its amended rules to exempt these contractors from the registration requirement as well.

The exemption for certain contractors, the oral pre-job notification, and the 100-square-foot clarification all were adopted by DOSH as emergency rules in August and can remain in effect for up to 120 days. The tenfold fee increase is not in effect yet.

A public hearing is scheduled by DOSH on the proposed changes for Oct. 19 at 525 Golden Gate Ave., Room 101, in San Francisco. Written comments should be directed to Ron E. Medeiros, Senior Counsel, DOSH, Department of Industrial Relations, Legal Unit, 525 Golden Gate Ave., Room 616, San Francisco, Calif. 94102; (415) 557-2960.

Nuclear Safety

'SAFE STORAGE' RATHER THAN DISMANTLING PROPOSED FOR DAMAGED THREE MILE ISLAND UNIT

PHILADELPHIA—(By a BNA Staff Correspondent)—In a submission to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, GPU Nuclear Corp. (GPUN) has proposed keeping its damaged Three Mile Island Unit 2 reactor (TMI-2) in "safe, monitored storage" for some 30 years following completion of cleanup operations, rather than completely dismantling the plant.