FILE NAME: Asbestos in Hair Dryers (HD)

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Gillette Medical Evaluation Laboratories — Inter-Office Memo

Date: April 25, 1979

Copies to: J. Morton
V. Petrella
File 01

From: M. Roddy

To: L. Hardy

Subject: Asbestos in Gillette Hair Dryers

GMEL has reviewed data generated by GRI on two Gillette hair dryers containing asbestos coil supports. It is our opinion that the amount of material emitted from these units will not constitute a hazard. This opinion was based on threshold limit value for asbestos as published in the 1978 edition of the TLV manual adopted by the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. This document lists the threshold limit value for asbestos at 5 fibers/cc greater than 5μm in length. An establishment is in compliance with the TLV if this level remains 5 fibers/cc during an entire 8-hour working day.

The data indicates that the units expelled fibers at a maximum rate of 0.011 fibers/ml and the TLV as stated previously is 5. The conclusion reached is that the tested hair dryers produce asbestos at a rate that is 1/450 the TLV.

In reviewing the EMV data, it should be noted that there are several questionable areas that would not permit direct comparison of the data. The GRI protocol involved running the hair dryer with a tube attached to the end. At the end of this tube was a filter on which the fibers impacted. EMV did not use this protocol stating that the back pressure from air hitting the filter would not interfere with an accurate reading. EMV ran hair dryers where the air expelled when through a water medium and thereby decreased the amount of back pressure. The water was then filtered and the fibers were counted. The second questionable area involves how the fibers were counted. The GRI study involved fibers hitting the target filter. If the fiber broke in two, three pieces, which could be determined by their close proximity, they were counted individually and not as one fiber. The differences in protocols could cause more breakage in one rather than the other.

Based on the information from the GRI study and the published TLV for asbestiform particles, GMEL does not feel that the Gillette hair dryers contain asbestos enough to constitute a hazard to the consumer.

M. Roddy

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