

UNITED STATES GYPSUM COMPANY

1000 EAST NORTHWEST HIGHWAY

AREA CODE 312

RESEARCH



DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS 60018

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CENTER

October 24, 1975

John N. Harrington, M.D.
Obstetrics - Gynecology
Medical Arts Center
221 7th Street
Columbus, Mississippi 39701

Dear Dr. Harrington:

This letter is in response to your inquiry concerning AUDICOTE Acoustical Plaster prompted by a September 20, 1975 article in the Memphis newspaper, THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL. While we do not know with certainty that the product actually applied to the interior of your home is a United States Gypsum Company product, the specification you furnished with your letter so indicates and we are most happy to have this opportunity to comment on some aspects of the newspaper article.

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL article presents data apparently pertinent only to a specific set of conditions which exist when heating and cooling air is distributed, presumably in a commercial building, by way of a ceiling plenum. Typically, structural steel framing is present in a plenum and is protected with lightweight, asbestos-containing fireproofing compound instead of portland cement fireproofing. The fireproofing compound is different in terms of formulation and application than AUDICOTE Acoustical Plaster. Plena also house other services such as gas, water, sanitary plumbing, electric conduit, and telephone cable. Consequently, plena are entered frequently by servicemen for repairs and renovation to the service systems. Therefore, the possibility of damage to the unprotected fireproofing compound in these confined spaces by service personnel does exist.

I am unable to speculate on the amount of asbestos that was required to formulate the fireproofing encountered by the investigators named in the article; however, in the case of AUDICOTE Acoustical Plaster, the composition consists essentially



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of expanded perlite, other inorganic minerals and a foaming agent. This composition produces the lightweight, open structure which accounts for its excellent acoustical and aesthetic qualities. AUDICOTE Acoustical Plaster contains only a minor amount of asbestos fiber which adds body to the wet mortar, thereby reducing its tendency to flow and sag on application to the ceiling. More importantly, painting is customary in the course of normal decorating and I assume that the plaster in your home is painted. The paint provides abundant protection against loss of any of the constituents of the plaster. We routinely recommend a thin, spray-applied coat of vinyl latex ceiling flat paint appropriately thinned for spray application. A heavy coat of paint, or numerous applications of paint, will obviously impair the acoustical efficiency of AUDICOTE Acoustical Plaster.

In summary, I am not aware of, nor can I conceive of, a hazardous exposure resulting from a properly installed and maintained AUDICOTE Acoustical Plaster. The conditions described in the newspaper article obviously emanate from a fireproofing compound, and the investigators admitted that this only occurs when accompanied by "directly visible damage to the sprayed material"

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with our view of this newspaper article.

Sincerely,

Kenneth S. Freeman
Senior Research Associate
Research and Development

KSF:mmn

bcc: #149 M. R. Helton



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