Westinghouse rejects inspectors

By DON JORDAN
E-T Environmental Writer

Representatives of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) who sought to inspect air quality for PCB-compounds were denied entry to Westinghouse's local capacitor manufacturing plant April 26, NIOSH officials said today.

Robert Rosensteel, chief of the industrial hygene section of NIOSH's hazard evaluation and technical assistance branch in Cincinnati advised that Westinghouse refused permission to enter the plant on April 26.

According to Rosensteel, NIOSH had received a request from a worker at the plant to monitor and evaluate health hazards involved with the Monsanto PCB fluids called Aroclors used at the local Westinghouse plant.

"We notified the company that we had this request," said Rosensteel, adding that the company's corporate attorney refused permission to enter. "We didn't take the position that this was proper and we explained that to the attorney."

Dr. Robert Ligo, also of NIOSH in Cincinnatti, said the health hazard evaluation request concerned Diphenyl (also called biphenyl) which is a component of the Arocior compounds.

Ligo said Biphenyl is a fungicide.

"We don't really know any more about it. The (workers) concerned about working with it," said Ligo.

Ligo and Rosensteel both indicated that the entry refusal was being "worked out" at this time.

"We have a right of entry, but we may have to get a court order to get in," said Ligo. Ligo is acting chief of the Cincinnatti NIOSH medical section.

Robert M. Anderson, environmental control manager at Westinghouse, said this morning the NIOSH inspectors were denied entry because Westinghouse wanted a joint inspection by NIOSH and company industrial hygienists. He added:

"We've notified NIOSH that we are willing to have them come in. We've asked them to set up another date."

The air sampling was to be conducted to detect airborne biphenyls in the plant's interior atmosphere that is mixed with the PCB fluid, Arocior 1016 and other Monsanto PCB fluids.

Biphenyl, the basic building block for a PCB, is a toxic chemical listed in industrial reference books on hazardous chemicals. Biphenyl has the ability to vaporize at even room temperature and emits a "pleasant odor." The PCB used by Westinghouse has been described as an "aeromatic insulating fluid."

Safety limits for the Biphenyl were established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in 1968 at 0.2 parts per million in air where workers are exposed to the fluid.

In *Dangerous Properties of Industrial Materials*, the so-called "bible" of hazardous industrial chemicals, Biphenyl is given the following hazard ratings:

• inhalation or ingestion, may cause permanent injury or death after very short exposure to small quantities.

Human experience with Biphenyl (synonym Diphenyl) was reported in the American Medical Association's *Archieves of Environmental Health* in Feb., 1973.

An article entitled "Diphenyl

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Poisoning in Fruit Paper Production" written by five Finnish doctors detailed the physical consequences of Biphenyl poisoning suffered by workers in Finland who were exposed to the toxic chemical which was used to impregnate paper for wrapping fruit products. The paper was used as an insulator in shipping the fruit.

The amount of Biphenyl in the air continues to rise as temperature increases.

Although temperatures during the manufacturing process in capacitor production at Westinghouse are unknown, it is known that the Arocior fluids are subjected to temperatures much higher than room temperature in both the capacitor washer and at the tanks where the capacitors are filled with the PCB fluid in vacuum ovens.

John Lewis Shoaff, the company's materials engineer did much research over an eight-year period concerning the effects of temperatures on PCBs, was at the Mayo Clinic in March.

Westinghouse plant manager Don Sauter refused to provide any information on Shoaff's health or why he was at the clinic during an April 28, telephone interview. Sauter said he would not discuss any employe's records with the press. Sauter also said he was unaware of any health hazards associated with uses.

Shoaff is the Westinghouse official who warned the Indiana State Board of Health about hazards associated with the disposal of PCBs in 1972. Shoaff also made reference in that 1972 letter to a series of "technical reports" on inertees, the trade name Westinghouse applies to the PCB fluids called Aroclors by Monsanto, that were sent to the state in 1969. Those reports are not on file at the Indiana State Board of Health.

While Shoaff had no comment on his health or the visit to Mayo's, fellow workers observed that Shoaff has suffered a large weight loss.

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