

type letter: System Planning Letter

date:

distribution list: A-1, I-13, E-2A

related letters: GL 77-07-024, GL 78-08-045

other:

to: Company Presidents
Copies to Company Medical Directors and Safety Coordinators

from: Vice President, Human Resources

description: Provides guidelines for protecting employees against excessive exposures to airborne asbestos fibers.

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Section 29 CFR 1910.1001 of Standards promulgated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires all employers to establish and maintain an effective program for protecting their employees against excessive exposure to airborne asbestos particles. This letter, in conjunction with related letters specified above, provides guidelines and procedures to assist the Operating Telephone Companies in developing and implementing the programs needed to assure compliance with the current OSHA Standard for asbestos.

Baseline environmental studies conducted by the Environmental Health and Safety Department of Bell Telephone Laboratories have shown that most Bell System workplaces do not expose employees to airborne asbestos fibers and that where exposures do occur, they are generally well below those permitted by the current Standard. However, several work operations have been identified and evaluated by these studies as having potential for exposures beyond those permitted by the current standard. These work operations include motor vehicle maintenance operations on brakes and clutches, building maintenance and repair operations in company-owned buildings, and station installation, rearrangement and repair operations in customer-owned buildings where asbestos or products containing asbestos have been used for general fireproofing and heat insulation.

Work operations described above may be performed in either of two kinds of workplaces: (1) Company provided workplaces; and (2) customer provided workplaces. Since each kind of workplace poses different problems to Operating Telephone Companies as employers, separate recommendations have been provided for each.

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American Telephone and
Telegraph Company
195 Broadway
New York, N. Y. 10007
Phone (212) 333-3333

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