

DIVISION OF SAFETY AND HYGIENE
INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION OF OHIO

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
BRK-71

September 18, 1951

Re: Frigidaire Corporation
Morraine City, Ohio

James H. Fluker, Superintendent
Division of Safety and Hygiene
Columbus, Ohio

Dear Sir:

On August 21, 1951, a visit was made to the above named company to survey their propane installation. Contact was made with the following officials of the company: L. L. Joffe, General Foreman Manufacturing Research Laboratory, Plant No. 2; John W. Mills, Investigations Plant Protection Department; William J. Dobbin, Assistant Engineer, Industrial Hygiene Laboratory; H. Kline, Industrial Hygiene Engineer; Carl H. Klemm, General Foreman Plumbing Department; Charles E. Denning, Assistant Supervisor Maintenance Department, Plant No. 2; Frank O'Mara, Foreman Plumbing Department; Harry Jackson, Supervisor Safety Department, Plant No. 2; Earl Gebhart, Assistant Director, Safety Department, Frigidaire. Mr. Grant is an FIA Inspector.

This company uses propane and butane when the natural gas supply is shut off. This only occurs during a gas shortage in the winter time. The liquids, propane and butane are contained in large storage tanks located above ground at a safe distance from any operating building. There are ten tanks. These tanks are continually sprayed with water in the summer months. The spraying of water acts two-fold. It prevents high temperatures on the tank, thus lowering the internal pressure. It also is a source of water in case of fire at or in one of the tanks.

The propane and butane are pumped to a vaporizing house wherein they are changed into a gaseous state by means of heat. This heat is in the form of steam. The gas then enters the various buildings through pipes where it is used chiefly at heating and drying furnaces. Practically all of the joints on large steel pipes are welded. There are some joints at elbows and also nipples connected to valves, which are threaded. The threads are coated with a special type pipe cement, which will not harden, in other words, it stays in a plastic state. All the small case iron piping is connected by threads.

When propane was used, the employees noted that some leaks were present in the lines in the operating buildings. These leaks were quickly repaired. It was easy to identify leaks due to the fact that the propane is odorized with a material called ethyl mercaptan. This substance produces an odor of rotten cabbage. If it were not for this odor, leaks could not be quickly identified.

The writer will never make a statement that he believes a propane insulation to be absolutely safe. However, the Frigidaire Company has, in the writer's opinion, checked every possible source which might lead to a fire or explosion. They have highly trained men for the propane operations and in case these men are absent, there are others who are capable of handling such.

The fire department is well informed of the dangers of propane and the guard force is well aware of the hazards.

There are no specific recommendations to be made, but the writer wonders why an air-hose would be present in a vaporizer house. If it is not necessary for some specific operation, then it should be removed.

From the number of men contacted by the writer, it is quite evident that the Frigidaire Company is vitally interested in the safety of their propane and butane operations. The writer wishes to thank the management for the courtesy and cooperation extended to him while surveying this plant.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Hanna
Safety Advisor

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