

MCA UPDATING VC ADVISORY

MCA has stopped circulation of a chemical safety publication because of recent events involving employees in vinyl chloride operations.

The action on the 1972 edition of MCA's Chemical Safety Data Sheet SD-56, on vinyl chloride, follows a report by the B. F. Goodrich Chemical Company that five of its employees at one plant had experienced fatal cases of angiosarcoma (a rare form of cancer) of the liver.

Through MCA, a group of companies producing vinyl chloride monomer and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) resins has been conducting animal exposure studies and an epidemiological study of industry workers.

Uncompleted at this time, the current studies were initiated because of reports from Italy by Dr. P. L. Viola that long-term massive exposures of rats to vinyl chloride vapors had produced malignant tumors of a kind not found in man.

In its 1972 revision of the data sheet, MCA called attention to the report, but added that carcinogenicity (cancer-causing) to humans had not been observed.

A revised edition of the vinyl chloride data sheet is planned after this question has been resolved.

COMPANY, GOVERNMENT TIGHTEN SAFETY ON JOB EXPOSURE TO VINYL CHLORIDE

Extra precautionary measures to reduce employee exposure to vinyl chloride to a minimum have been put into practice at a B. F. Goodrich Company plant in Louisville, Ky. At the same time, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health announced a crash research program to determine possible occupational health hazards of vinyl chloride.

Both moves came shortly after the company announced that six employees at its Louisville plant have contracted angiosarcoma, a rare liver cancer, that may have been caused by exposure to substances involved in the manufacture of polyvinyl chloride. The disease has proven fatal to five of the employees.

In a more recent development, the Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board has added vinyl chloride to its list of occupational cancer-causing agents.

OSHA WANTS ADVICE

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is considering a standard for occupational exposure to inorganic mercury. Public comment is invited on whether a new standard is needed on the basis of government criteria or other information. Replies should be sent to: Office of Standards, OSHA, U. S. Dept. of Labor, Rm. 504, 400 First St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210 before March 25, 1974.

The board also has recommended that the present exposure ceiling of 500 parts per million be reduced to 75 ppm, with a normal threshold of 50 ppm averaged over an eight-hour workday.

The board recognized that in certain operations, such as cleaning inside mixing tanks, vinyl chloride fumes are more concentrated than the proposed limit. In such situations, the board recommended, exposure to more than 200 ppm "without proper protective equipment shall constitute an imminent danger."

If adopted, the proposed regulations could go into effect by the end of March.

Goodrich said that measures being taken at Louisville include some of its own initiative, and others suggested by the government. The company says it is in compliance with federal and state guidelines. NIOSH has made the following recommendations:

- Housekeeping—Resin should be stored in closed containers. Eating facilities should be separated from the work area.

- Clothing—Protective clothing, including coveralls, should be provided all employees. Those working in mixing tanks should wear impervious suits.

- Showers—All employees in the polymerization process should take showers after completing work.

- Monitoring—To determine where leaks occur, monitoring should be carried on throughout the work environment.

- Respiratory protection—All employees transferring vinyl chloride should be provided self-contained breathing apparatus and those working in tanks should have air-supplied respirators.

Getting underway at NIOSH is a study of employees at plants that have had polyvinyl chloride operations for 15 years or more. The study will include employees with varying lengths of exposure.

NIOSH also is looking for other diseases that may result from exposure to vinyl chloride. Part of its efforts will involve animal toxicological studies with the National Cancer Institute.

DOW EXPANDING TOXICOLOGY LAB



Construction equipment big and small was on hand at groundbreaking ceremonies for a new \$2 million toxicology laboratory at the Midland, Mich., research campus of the Dow Chemical Company. Nine-year-old Matthew Gehring handled "construction chores" as Dow officials watch. Dr. Perry J. Gehring, Matthew's father, heads Dow's toxicology research.

The Dow Chemical Company has begun a \$2 million expansion of facilities in Midland, Mich., for research into product safety to protect employees, customers and the environment. When completed early next year, the new toxicology laboratory will triple the company's capacity for studying the effects of inhaling chemicals and gases.

The primary purpose of Dow's toxicology work is to study raw materials used in manufacturing products and by-products, and chemicals, including drugs, being developed in the company's laboratories. The goal is to produce information to provide for safe manufacture, handling and use of chemicals.

Dow's first facility for toxicology research was established in 1933. Today, more than 45,000 square feet of floor space in three buildings is used to investigate about 500 chemicals annually.

Memo from PAUL J. JOSEPHANS

3/12/74

TO A. Cummin
D. Weinstein
W. Kocher

FYI

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