



Lead Industries Association, Inc.

292 Madison Avenue • New York, N. Y. 10017 • Telephone: (212) 679-6036

July 25, 1972

SUBJECT: NEWS BROADCASTS & PUBLICITY
FEATURING LEAD CABLE SHEATH
FAILURE

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE LEAD INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION, INC.

Recent failures of electrical cables in the New York City area were discussed on News Broadcasts by both NBC and CBS yesterday evening. A piece of lead sheathed cable was displayed by the science editor and the lead was blamed for the ultimate failure.

Our Mr. Connel A. Baker investigated this report and a copy of his memo concerning the matter is attached.

It is apparent that sometimes what is not said is a significant as what is said. Con Edison omitted the fact that the failing cables were from 30 to 40 years old, and have given such good service that any new cable will also be lead sheathed!

Sincerely,

Jerome F. Smith

Jerome F. Smith
Secretary & Manager

JFS:lm
Attachment



Lead Industries Association, Inc.

262 Madison Avenue • New York, N. Y. 10017 • Telephone: (212) 679-6030

TO: JEROME F. SMITH

FROM: CONNELL A. BAKER

Subject: Telecasts of July 24 having to do with explanation of cable failures on Consolidated Edison lines, in which lead sheathing material was cited as the culprit due to corrosion by salt used for snow control.

I discussed this at some length with William Zonowski, Staff Cable Engineer for Consolidated Edison, 4 Irving Place, New York, New York.

The spokesman said that they helped put together the telecasts and that the information had been cleared with the Con Ed Public Relations Department. He did agree that the breakdown in lead cable is caused by moisture, salt, and other chemicals found in underground tunnel conduits, thus causing short circuits and failure of cables. The one point not mentioned in the telecasts, according to Mr. Zonowski, was that these cables were from 30 to 40 years old. He stated that this was the very reason that lead sheath was used -- its' reputation and engineering reliability for long life. It is impossible to inspect miles and miles of conduit cable for defect without some specific symptom of trouble. The age omission from the telecasts was intentional because the general public would not understand the technical problems involved and would only accuse the company of poor maintenance, a charge already made by some.

The engineer stated that lead sheath cable is "still the best" and being used exclusively by his company in underground systems. Since the introduction in recent years, however, of the polyvinyls, this cable is further jacketed with the plastic material and corrosion from some types of mineral attack is additionally lessened.

CAB
CAB:lm
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