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Toxic Materials News

Weekly business newsletter published from the Nation's Capital

Publisher: LEONARD A. EISERER Senior Editor: CATHY H. DOMBROWSKI Editor: TOM GUAY

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SLANTS & TRENDS

A "FAIRLY SUBSTANTIAL PERCENTAGE OF PRODUCTS" containing asbestos will be the subject of an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) being developed by EPA as an initial step in its effort to regulate asbestos outside school buildings. The ANPR will seek discussion not only of risks from exposure during actual use of products containing asbestos, but also on risks incurred during mining, milling and manufacturing, an EPA official has told TMN. The agency has termed this the "life-cycle" approach to evaluating asbestos hazards, and hopes to use it in obtaining an unreasonable risk determination on all products listed in the ANPR, thereby avoiding the burdensome process of having to prove that unreasonable risks exist for each individual product. The ANPR is expected to be issued sometime in October.

AN ANPR ON THE SCHOOL ASBESTOS PROGRAM was released Aug. 14 by EPA, and will be published in early September. This document announces the development of regulations requiring the inspection of schools for materials containing asbestos, the correction of situations where obvious deterioration of asbestos-containing materials has occurred, and periodic monitoring. Eight factors for consideration in assessing the extent of hazard are included.

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AN INTERAGENCY ADVISORY GROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS for improving Federal regulation of toxic substances (see story on page 259) was not well received by industry. Tatiana Roodkowsky of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce suggested that recommended restrictions on the protection of confidential business information "could hinder innovation and growth." She pointed out that "great strides have been made in protecting human health and the environment," yet current laws recognize the need for the chemical industry to expand. The report of the Toxic Substances Strategy Committee is a "hodge-podge" of concepts and recommendations that have either been disputed or discredited since the committee was created in 1977, according to a statement from the Chemical Manufacturers Association.

R002 1394

Published weekly by Business Publishers, Inc. Editorial and business offices: P.O. Box 1067, Silver Spring, MD 20910, 301-587-6300. Subscription price $175 per year, $90 for six months, U.S., Canada and Mexico; $210 per year in all other countries (includes Air Mail delivery). Multiple copy rates on request to Henry Kleiner, Jr., Business Manager. Printed in U.S.A.

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