

October 28, 1933

Mr. H. L. Miner
Safety Department
E. I. duPont de Nemours and Co.,
Wilmington, Delaware

Dear Mr. Miner:

Through Mr. Schaefer of the Manufacturing Department of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation your inquiry concerning the use of leaded gasoline in blow torches made to Mr. Stecker at the Dye Works Plant has been brought to my attention. I remember that you mentioned this matter to me in Chicago some weeks ago. I was unable to see Dr. Parmelee at the Dye Works Plant to discuss the matter with him so that I am writing direct to you and sending a copy of the letter to him.

The difficulty of obtaining gasoline without lead is obviously increasing. It is quite apparent, therefore, that gasoline containing lead is very likely to be used for almost any purpose for which gasoline is used. The Ethyl Gasoline Corporation and the distributors of Ethyl Gasoline will do what they can to prevent the use of leaded gasoline for purposes other than automobile fuel. However it is quite certain that they will not entirely succeed. Just what may eventually be done to supply ordinary gasoline for a variety of purposes is hard to anticipate. Therefore I am quite willing to assume that leaded gasoline will be used for a variety of purposes for which it was not intended. It is almost certain that it will be used in some measure in blow torches. It seems inevitable to me that the use of leaded gasoline in blow torches will result in difficulties of the type described in your letter. I am no technical expert on this matter but it seems reasonable to me that some deposits may occur in and around the jets and that some corrosion of the parts may take place. I should be interested in knowing just how much difficulty is likely to be occasioned by this, and whether or not it will be of any importance from a safety point of view. I should imagine that the bad effects from the point of view of injury to equipment would be no responsibility on the part of gasoline distributors but would be rather an accepted responsibility on the part of gasoline purchasers.

From the point of view of safety in relation to lead absorption, I can not conceive of the leaded gasoline giving rise to occupational hazard. First of all the amounts of lead occurring in the fume from the blow torch will be very small. Secondly they will be so dissipated by the resultant air currents that they can scarcely be expected to result in appreciable lead absorption. I do not feel that there is any factor of danger of any moment involved in the practice of using leaded gasoline in blow torches.

I would appreciate it very much indeed if you would give me any further information which you have or may later have on this matter, or on any other matters which may come to your notice which are related to hazards associated with the distribution of leaded gasoline.

With kindest personal regards,

Cordially yours,

RAK:ES

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

Copy to Dr. Cameron

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