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TO: W. H. BRADY
FROM: J. B. YOUNG

*Bldg 305 SPIN-17544
Amines investigation*

ATTENDANCE AT ASBESTOS SEMINAR
JUNE 2, 1972 - WILMINGTON

Following are some of the more important facts which I picked up at the Asbestos Seminar that I attended on June 2, 1972, in Wilmington:

- The Emergency Standard for asbestos work which OSHA has been following since December 7, 1971, is scheduled to be replaced by a new standard "any day now." The word is that the new standard will probably be announced on June 7, 1972. Afterwards, industry is expected to have a period of time before the standard becomes effective.
- The general opinion is that the new standard will be much more restrictive than the current Emergency Standard.
- The basis for the new standard is a study titled "Criteria for Recommended Standard - Occupational Exposure to Asbestos." This Criteria was developed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.
- As an example of the type of tightening up that is expected in the new standard, the NIOSH Criteria specifies an 8-hour time-weighted average maximum concentration of 2 fibers greater than 5 microns in length per milliliter of air whereas the present Emergency Standard permits an average of 5 fibers. Short term maximum allowable concentrations are also much more restrictive than at present.
- The NIOSH Criteria specifies strict medical surveillance of asbestos workers including pre-employment medical tests and evaluation, periodic medical evaluation - plus specified checks during employment and comprehensive termination checks. An asbestos worker is defined as anyone who might be exposed to asbestos.
- None of those attending indicated experiencing any problem getting below the current Emergency Standard of 5 fibers greater than 5 microns in length per milliliter of air. This parallels our experience. There was considerable concern about being able to consistently stay below 2 fibers/milliliter. In fact, it was felt that there could be more than a 2-fiber counting deviation or variation from one technician to another making sample analysis.

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- If the NIOSH Criteria does become the basis for the new Standard it was concluded that many parts of it will be extremely difficult to live with. In this regard, it was recommended that we wait and see what OSHA does come out with and then see how we can best cope with it.
- Nevertheless, quite a few of the company plants who were represented are working to get in line with as many of the NIOSH Criteria recommendations as they can, in anticipation that the Criteria will become law. (We are getting a copy of the NIOSH Criteria for Belle Plant use.)
- Most of the plant people I talked with have been making regular sample checks for some time - some for as long as two years.
- Some make one sample check per month as we do, but most are making more. One plant makes five sample checks every month.
- All the sites I talked with have more than one instrument for taking samples. Most have two.
- Most sites routinely attach the sampler intake to the worker's lapel and take snap "worst condition" samples as well as 8-hour time weighted average samples.
- Sawing is considered the greatest source of asbestos dusting. Several locations require the use of respirators whenever their men saw asbestos regardless of whether it is by hand or machine or whether it is in the shop or in the field. One site has built portable power ventilated work wagons which their people use any-time they saw asbestos in the field.
- At least one location provides disposable paper work suits which are replaced every day. They require their men to remove these worksuits and wash up prior to coffee break and lunch break. Other locations require their men to vacuum their work clothes prior to coffee break, lunch and quitting time.
- Most locations prohibit eating in their insulation shop. Some outlaw the presence or use of chewing gum, cigarettes, and tobacco in their insulation shop.
- Most locations require the use of respirators during the removal of insulation. Dismantling old insulation is considered the second greatest source of asbestos dusting (sawing being the number one source).
- Some locations have alerted the laundry that cleans their work clothes of the possible presence of asbestos dust and of the hazards.
- In most all cases the responsibility for the establishment and administration of the asbestos control program rests with the supervisor in charge of the insulators.

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- No real substantial progress has been made toward finding a suitable safe substitute material for asbestos although there is much interest in this. The prospects are not optimistic either. Those attending were definitely not encouraged to look for a break-through in materials as a way out of the problems of living with the hazards of asbestos.

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