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# OSHA Vinyl Chloride Proposal Hit

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WASHINGTON — Proposed government limits on worker exposure to vinyl chloride are not technologically feasible and could cause the loss of more than two million jobs, plastics industry spokesman warned yesterday as several days of Labor Department hearings on the standards began.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has proposed that allowable employe exposure to vinyl chloride be reduced to "no detectable level." An emergency temporary standard is now in effect limiting it to 50 parts per million parts of air to which workers are exposed.

This standard, issued in April, represented a considerable reduction from the 500 PPM guideline which had been in effect previously. OSHA came out with it following reports of several workers exposed to vinyl chloride having died from liver cancer.

The even tougher "no detectable level" standard was proposed in May soon after laboratory studies with mice indicated that the 50 PPM concentration had resulted in some of the rodents developing liver cancer.

Vinyl chloride is widely used in the manufacture of plastics, and that industry is greatly concerned that the rigorous new guideline, if adopted, could cripple it. Among the points raised by plastics industry representatives yesterday was a study of the economic impact the proposed standard could have.

The report, prepared by Arthur D. Little, Inc., for the Society of the Plastics Industry, concludes that "an immediate shutdown of all polyvinyl chloride resin plants in the U. S." could result, with the loss of 1.7 to 2.2 million jobs in consumer and related industries, and an annual production loss ranging up to $90 billion.

The study also claims that [illegible] construction and motor vehicle sectors would be particularly hard-hit, because of their "high degree of dependency on PVC resin." Production bottlenecks would [illegible] occur [illegible]

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sulated wire and cable, the report asserts.

Industry spokesmen urged that alternative standards be adopted instead, which they said would be more realistic and give factories ample time to comply. They suggested that a ceiling of 40 PPM be set, effective Oct. 5, with a maximum allowable daily time-weighted average of 25 PPM. On Oct. 5 of next year, the ceiling would become 25 PPM, with no time-weighted average. On Oct. 5, 1976, a maximum time-weighted average of 10 PPM would go into effect, with the ceiling remaining at 25PPM.

The above standards would apply to polyvinyl chloride resin plants. Somewhat different standards were suggested for vinyl chloride monomer producing plants. There, the industry said, a ceiling of 25 PPM should go into effect in October, with a 10 PPM ceiling being applied in three years. A maximum time-weighted average of 10 PPM would apply initially and be lowered to 5 PPM in 1977.

As the hearings opened yesterday, OSHA official Daniel P. Boyd emphasized that all of the testimony being heard this week will be taken into consideration before a final standard is issued, and that the controversial proposed standard is, as of now, "just that — a [illegible]"

The [illegible] of massive job losses, should [illegible] "no detectable level" [illegible] go into effect, was also raised yesterday by [illegible] F. Webster, a representative of the Polyvinyl Chloride [illegible] Manufacturers [illegible]. He said the proposed standard would bring about "a serious economic disaster" in his industry and others dependent on it.

Mr. Webster urged a lowering [illegible] standard. As he put it, "we [illegible] there must be some [illegible] of vinyl chloride in the [illegible] [illegible]

## Other Testimony

Other testimony yesterday included accounts of experiments on laboratory mice who were exposed to vinyl chloride both in this country and in Italy. A telegram was read from Professor Cesare Maltoni, who reported that out of 60 mice in Bologna exposed to 50 PPM for seven months, cancer had been detected in 13 instances.

A total of 95 individuals or organizations have asked to testify at the hearings, which are slated to run at least through Saturday. Yesterday's opening session was expected to extend well into the evening.

Meanwhile, in a related development on Capitol Hill, a spokesman for the U. S. Chamber of Commerce told a House subcommittee hearing that OSHA should be required to submit a "cost impact" statement with each new safety or health standard it proposes. "The cost of complying with OSHA raises the cost of doing business," Richard B. Berman testified, in urging that "the imposition of new compliance costs without a resultant benefit justifying that cost" be avoided whenever possible.

Mr. Berman, the U.S. chamber's director of labor law, said a basic change was needed in OSHA to put greater reliance on voluntary compliance by business and industry rather than on punitive action.

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