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United States Department of the Interior

MINING ENFORCEMENT AND SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

329 U.S. POST OFFICE AND COURTHOUSE
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12201

Edward J. Podgorski, Subdistrict Manager

Inspection No. S20

Identification No.: 30-00611

COMBINED SPOT INSPECTION REPORT

This report is based on an inspection made pursuant to Section 4 of the Federal Metal and Nonmetallic Mine Safety Act (30 Stat. 772).

Company: Gouverneur Talc Company, Inc.

Mine Name: Mine No. 1 and Mill

City: Balmat County: St. Lawrence State: New York

Date(s) of Inspection: July 26-28, 1977 Telephone Number: 315 287-0100

MESA Inspector(s): Arthur J. McLaughlin, Metal and Nonmetal Mine Inspector

No. of Employees: 170 Work Schedule: hours/Shift 8 Shift/Day 1 Days/Week 2

Type of Mine: Underground Mining Method: Open Stope Product: Talc

Company Officials: George E. Erdman, Vice President

Union Representatives: Roy Trombley, President, United Steelworkers of America

Local: 979, Harrisville, New York 13640; William Kelley, Representative District 8,

United Steelworkers of America, 8 Putnam Place, Port Henry, New York 12974

Inspection Party: Floyd Robinson, Personnel and Safety Director

REMARKS: No. of Last NOTICE Issued: 392 Date Issued: 8/26/77

No. of Last ORDER Issued: 43 Date Issued: 8/25/77

No. of Last HEALTH NOTICE Issued: Date Issued:

Issued Notices and/or Orders were delivered to:

Two area samples were collected at the 700 level crusher station in addition to the total particulate sample. One sample was analyzed for the concentration of fibers having a length of 5 microns or greater and a length to width aspect ratio of 3 to 1 (current criteria for asbestiform mineral fiber). The result was 13.1 fibers per cubic centimeter. The second sample was analyzed for the ratio of asbestiform mineral fibers to nonasbestiform mineral fibers that meet the abovementioned criteria. The result was 87 percent asbestiform to 13 percent nonasbestiform. Applying this ratio to the measured concentration we can conclude that the concentration of asbestiform mineral fiber at the 700 level crusher station, at the time of sampling, was 11.4 fibers/cc. Since the current threshold limit value (TLV) is 5 fibers/cc, immediate action must be taken to reduce personal exposures at the 700 level crusher area.

A sample for fiber count was also taken at the skip loading area below the 700 level crusher and showed an airborne fiber concentration of 3.0 fibers/cc. Assuming the same asbestiform fiber to nonasbestiform fiber ratio as determined at the 700 level crusher, the actual concentration of asbestiform fiber in the skip loading area was 2.61 fibers/cc. In view of the proposed standard of 2 fibers/cc, which will become law in the near future, it is recommended that consideration be given to this location.

Fiber identification samples were also taken at the tripper belt head pulley area, No. 4 Hardinge Mill, and at the No. 3 packer bagging area. The results were 67-, 75-, and 90-percent asbestiform mineral fiber, respectively.

Health studies conducted by MESA and NIOSH have produced data that documents the presence of asbestiform mineral fibers in the No. 1 Mine ore body and personal exposure data collected by MESA and NIOSH indicates possible overexposure to asbestiform mineral fibers by mine and mill workers; therefore, personal exposures must be quantified and corrective action initiated in those cases where overexposures are evident.

If you have any questions, please contact this office.