

CHEMICALS



INTEROFFICE / LAKE CHARLES

TO Dr. Fred Jonas DATE January 31, 1980

FROM Dr. H. B. Lovejoy SUBJECT Pregnancy at Work

I am enclosing my memo to Frank Ludden, Employee Relations Director at Lake Charles, on my request that certain areas of the Lake Charles Plant be automatically put off limits to pregnant women. You will note in the second paragraph of this memo, that I made this recommendation based on the NIOSH Guidelines for Pregnancy at Work, which also shows a chart on page 16 of toxic chemicals and their relationship to pregnancy. You will recall that we talked about the various organic and other chemicals in relation to pregnancy when we met at the motel in LaPorte, TX with Dr. Bell and Dr. Powell, two or three months ago. We have also discussed this on the telephone. You will see that Mr. Ludden has written to Bill Lawrence in General Office concerning this same matter. This has been circulated to people only within our plant and to Mr. Lawrence at General Office, to my knowledge. I have not read all references in full but have reviewed the titles given in the NIOSH Guidelines of 1977 and have looked at them and feel that they are reliable. The references on both Lead and Mercury are listed on page 41. I have read the reference on Vinyl. Although, it only has to do with chromosomal aberrations, I feel that this is also a reliable reference. I do not give much credence to the Infante study. Because of these references and NIOSH publication, I feel that restriction of pregnant women from these areas is desirable. Of course, the chromosomal aberrations problem would have to do with women who are working in Vinyl prior to becoming pregnant. Nevertheless, it is well known among physicians that the waste anesthetic gases (many of which are chlorinated hydrocarbons) have resulted in an increase incidence of fetal abnormality and miscarriage in anesthetists. These chlorinated hydrocarbons were similar to our organics and probably are metabolized in a similar way. For these reasons, I feel that these areas of our plant should be off limits to pregnant women. I would like to also exclude women of childbearing ability from the organics area.

In conversation with Mr. Lawrence, Frank Ludden tells me that the Health Advisory Committee of General Office advised management to make the decision on the basis that there is no scientific evidence to indicate that problems can occur as a result of women working in these areas. I think this is erroneous and I am interested in trying to present the above information to this particular committee. I am sure you or your representatives could make this known. I think we should stress that not only is there a small amount of information indicating problems, but we will have to convince private physicians that there is good data proving no problems will occur.

I am enclosing a copy of the note dated February 3, 1979, from Linda Riggs' physician, stating "It is medically unadvisable to be exposed to vapors such as chlorine, hydrogen, etc. In my opinion, this patient should discontinue

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exposure to these agents immediately". This is signed by Dr. Robert Louviere. After receiving it, I talked with him on the phone and explained that I thought it was not hazardous either to the individual or to the fetus for her to work in either chlorine or hydrogen. He asked me if I could prove this. I checked with a number of experts in the field and there is no known evidence in regard to chlorine and caustic. The physician involved stated that since there was no evidence that there was no harm produced, he was not willing to take the chance because there might be.

I am also enclosing a memorandum from the physician of Julie Grooms, another employee, stating that on November 9, 1979, she should not work overtime until further notice and then on December 5, 1979, another note stating that she cannot work where exposed to fumes or chemicals. I was made aware of her pregnancy between these two notes. After she was found to be pregnant, she was assigned from the chlorine diaphragm cell area to the Maintenance Department as a painter's helper. She was assigned to paint ladders indicating they had been inspected. Her physician then sent me a copy of information put out by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists indicating that the various components of paint had materials which were hazardous to the fetus and also to the patient. This patient subsequently has been placed off work on A & S benefits because of a threatened miscarriage.

I have a great deal of other information in reference to this but hesitate sending what I have because of the volume. I feel that the primary problem is the obstetricians lack of knowledge or unwillingness to allow an apprehensive pregnant woman to work in an area where he cannot assure her no injury will occur to her fetus or to herself with absolute certainty. I cannot help but agree with a physician who feels this way and would feel that it would be better to put these individuals at home, if their job assignment cannot be made such that they are not exposed to potentially hazardous chemicals. If you would like for me to forward any or all information that I have, I would be more than happy to supply this. Perhaps you would like to review this when you are here.

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Enclosures

cc: F. C. Ludden
R. G. Corley/Murry Davis

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INDUSTRIES

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RECEIVED
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TO F. C. Ludden
FROM H. B. Lovejoy, M.D.
HBL

DATE December 20, 1979
SUBJECT Pregnancy at Work

As you know, we have recently had a pregnant woman who has had some medical problems. She was unable to work in certain areas. Unfortunately, she was assigned to a job which required that she move throughout all areas of the plant and I had thought that the Organics Area and the Mercury Cell Area as well as the Diaphragm Cell Repair Areas (lead) were off limits. Apparently this is not the case and I would like to suggest that a rule be established and be circulated to all supervisors that any woman who is pregnant should not be permitted to work in the (1) Chlorinated Organics Area, (2) Mercury Cell Area and (3) Cell Repair Area where molten lead is used.

Other restrictions may be necessary depending upon each individuals case but I would like to establish now that these areas are automatically off limits to all pregnant women. This decision is based upon "NIOSH Guidelines for Pregnancy and Work", page 16 as well as conference with Dr. Jonas.

/lb

cc: R. G. Corley

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CHEMICALS



INTEROFFICE / LAKE CHARLES

TO Bill Lawrence DATE January 8, 1980
FROM Frank C. Ludden *[Signature]* SUBJECT Female Employees

Our policy on working women of childbearing capabilities in the organic areas is clear. Do we have a policy on what to do when a female hourly employee is actually pregnant? As you can see by the attached, Lovejoy feels we should restrict them and has discussed this with Jonas.

We may or may not have duties a pregnated woman can do in the hourly jobs but if we could find a job the question of product restriction exists. Personal doctors are very restrictive in what they will say a pregnant plant employee can do, both for the protection of their patient and themselves.

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Attachment

cc: H. B. Lovejoy, M.D. ✓
J. M. Davis
J. R. Farst
W. H. Chapman

JAN 8 1980

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SAFETY.

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