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Plant - Hogansville, Georgia

UNITED STATES RUBBER COMPANY
Textile Division
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York 20. N.Y.

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
UR 94

May 13, 1959

BOARD OF BENEFITS & AWARDS
21st Floor
BUILDING

Subject: Asbestosis Cases - Asbeston Plant - Hogansville, Georgia

Asbestosis is an occupational disease associated with the manufacturing of asbestos fiber into various products. This disease affects the lungs and breathing capacity of an individual. Our company established the Asbeston Plant in Hogansville, Georgia, in 1942. When this process was put into production, dust control measures were very crude and inadequate. As a result, a number of employees received high dust exposure over a period of years until dust control equipment and procedures were much improved. For the last eight to ten years, dust control equipment and exposure has been considered to be at a reasonable control level. However, our best medical advice is that asbestos dust exposure, over a period of time, may eventually produce Asbestosis in an employee. This advice, of course, is tempered with the knowledge that individuals vary considerably in their susceptibility to Asbestosis.

Our exposure to employees developing Asbestosis in the future is much less than in the past. With our present medical control program, it is anticipated that employees will be removed from dust exposure at the first confirmed indication of their contracting Asbestosis. Medical opinion is that if this is done promptly, most employees should suffer little permanent harm or disability.

Employment in the Asbeston Plant is 140. Up to the present time, thirty-three individuals have been classified as suspected or confirmed Asbestosis cases. Of these, eight have been transferred or removed from dust exposure; five are to be moved in the near future. This will leave twenty-three employees who, according to medical advice, are not confirmed cases but should be kept under close medical observation.

The occupational disease hazard involved in the manufacture of Asbestos fiber was recognized when the company started manufacturing this product in 1942. X-rays of all employees entering asbestos production have been made on a semi-annual basis until 1957. Beginning in 1957, a new medical

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control program was introduced and x-rays are now made on an annual basis. The history of the medical control program at Hogansville reveals that with the cooperation of the Central Safety Section, we have had some outstanding medical authorities in this field to survey our facilities and make recommendations. These authorities include the Mallon Institute, New York University Medical School, Dr. Eugene P. Pendergrass of University of Pennsylvania Medical School, and doctors from the Georgia State Health Department. These medical authorities made valuable recommendations on dust and medical control procedures. The present medical and dust control procedures were developed as a result of their recommendations.

The medical control procedure consists of x-raying the employee each year, plus a complete medical examination by Dr. John G. Wells of Newnan, Georgia. This medical examination makes use of all known tests to develop information on the question of the employee having Asbestosis.

With the present medical control program which will be expanded by introducing additional tests now under development, our medical advisor should be able to do an even more accurate job in identifying suspected cases of Asbestosis. This new equipment and procedure is being introduced into the medical program because certain authorities in the field are of the opinion that the radiological findings may not indicate at an early enough date, the development of Asbestosis in an individual.

The employee that may be identified in the future as having suspected or early Asbestosis and suffers a limited degree of permanent partial disability, creates an employee and community relations problem that is very complicated. Medical opinion is that such employees should not be allowed in our plant with continued dust exposure. This means that the company must transfer the employee to a non-dust exposure job, or sever the employment relationship. Hogansville management will transfer the employee if a job opening exists and the employee has proper skills and is able to operate a regular job in the other textile operations at Hogansville. Our past experience in attempting to transfer has definitely proven that we can not make jobs for employees nor can we give them preference over longer service employees of the same skills that are already in the non-dust exposure operations. Therefore, if the employee can not be placed in the other operations, it will be necessary for him to leave the employment of the company.

It is anticipated that if our medical control program operates properly, most of the employees who have to leave our employment, due to finding of pulmonary changes, will not be disabled.

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Therefore, the Textile Division proposes that the following policy be adopted:

It is the company policy to have a special medical control program where employees are exposed to occupational disease hazards. The objective of the medical control program is the early recognition of any symptoms in an employee so that the employee may be removed from occupational disease exposure before appreciable damage can result. Therefore, when the medical control program results in a report that an employee should be removed from occupational disease exposure, the employee will be removed immediately.

Medical knowledge of Asbestosis is limited and competent medical authorities have various opinions concerning degree of exposure, cause and results of Asbestosis. Permissible dust limits that have been accepted in the past by public health officials and industry, in competent medical opinion will have to be questioned in the future and efforts made to constantly reduce dust exposure. Therefore, our cost estimates recognize that a number of changes and improvements in medical and dust control will be made in the future.

The company recognizes that the employee may desire to continue employment with the company and transfer to another job within the company. The transfer will be arranged provided there is a proper job opening and the employee is qualified to fill the job opening.

If transfer within the company can not be arranged, it will be necessary to sever the employment relationship. The company recognizes its responsibilities to employees and where employees are terminated due to occupational disease exposure, they will be paid termination allowance or disability allowance, whichever is applicable under the Textile Division Plan.

It is company policy to settle Workman's Compensation Cases under Georgia Workman's Compensation Act where company doctor says employee is disabled.

To supplement this information concerning the Asbestosis problem at Hogansville, I have attached to this letter the following information:

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- (1) Procedures pertaining to employees moved out of employment due to occupational disease development.
- (2) Proposed article for local plant paper.
- (3) Communications Program.
- (4) Estimate of Cost Exposure due to Occupational Disease at Asbeston Plant.

W. E. Clark
Vice President & General Manager
Textile Division

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attachments

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