



Interoffice Communication

To : All Plant Employees

From : Al Sather

Date : February 8, 1984

Subject : RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

This letter is to advise you of certain improvements being made in our plant respiratory protection program in response to the Conoco Chemicals' respirator/facial hair policy. This policy prohibits facial hair in the area of respirator face seals when VCM cannister masks, dust masks, or other negative pressure facepiece-type respirators are required for use during routine job duties. In such cases, it also recommends that some form of face fit-testing be used when other facial hair, although not in the seal area, is present.

We believe these requirements to be inconvenient for workers who wish to wear facial hair, difficult to enforce, and an administrative problem to handle. For these reasons, we are augmenting negative pressure facepiece type respirators with better equipment as follows:

New, lightweight Scott "Sling-Pak IIa" respirators have been stationed in the vinyl areas of the plant. They are 15-minute versions of the older, Scott "Air-Pak II" respirators now in wide use throughout the plant. They are intended for improved protection of workers involved in VCM leak detection and similar short-term tasks that might overexpose them to VCM. Like other Air Paks, they present no facial hair problems and provide respiratory protection in unknown concentrations of VCM.

We have stationed two of the new "Sling-Paks" in each of the two vinyl reactor units. A fifth is stationed at the Vinyl Control Room. We also have four (4) spare bottles for the respirators. They will be kept in the Emergency Equipment Station and charged with breathing quality air in the same way as regular Scott Air Paks. If we suddenly run out of Sling Pak bottles, regular 30-minute Air Paks should be used for Sling-Pak type jobs.

Operator training on the use of the Sling-Paks is scheduled for February. Upon completion of the training, we will remove all VCM cannister gas masks from VCM service throughout the plant.

We have also stationed Scott Air Paks at the top levels in both vinyl reactor areas. They are intended for escape purposes, allowing personnel otherwise trapped at these levels to proceed through VCM concentrations at lower (exit) levels.

We have purchased four (4) additional 3M Airhats. Operators who charge Dry Blend Masterbatch blenders are now required to use them instead of dust masks. The dust masks will still be made available for non-hazardous situations of operator convenience; e.g.: cold air, elective overprotection against minor nuisance dusting, etc.

We have also modified the Vinyl de-boxing equipment such that resin is conveyed under vacuum, eliminating dusting due to pressure leaks and the need for respiratory protection during de-boxing.

In summary, these changes will provide better respiratory protection while allowing employees the freedom of wearing facial hair, including beards, when they so desire.

Al Sather
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Al Sather
Safety Director

c: Bulletin Boards