

LEAD INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

Graybar Building, 420 Lexington Avenue
New York, N. Y.

September 28, 1932.

To Members of the Lead Industries Association:

During September, 1932, fifty-nine cases of lead poisoning of unusual origin were reported by the Baltimore Health Department. The outbreak of lead poisoning was entirely derived from the practice of the poorer colored element in using discarded battery casings for fuel. The breaking up and burning of these boxes generated lead dust and fumes which were breathed by colored children and others, resulting in lead poisoning.

Some of the children had advanced cases, showing the characteristic lead lines, stippling of the blood and X-ray symptoms.

It appears that the depression had so affected the colored section of the population in Baltimore that they used desperate means to keep warm last Winter. The City is now planning to supply free kindling and wood and has enlisted the cooperation of the Police Department to instruct all battery dealers not to permit old battery casings to get in the hands of any one who is likely to burn them.

The City has also reopened the public dump to the use of the battery dealers. Heretofore, the obnoxious character of the battery casings had made it necessary for the dealers to pay 25¢ per truckload in using a private dump.

Although the Baltimore authorities have the situation well in hand and no further trouble is to be expected there, many other cities in the United States undoubtedly duplicate the Baltimore conditions which led to the outbreak. It is therefore suggested that, whenever possible, you advise storage battery scrap dealers about the Baltimore circumstances, requesting them either to destroy their old battery boxes, or to dump them where they cannot be reclaimed for fuel by persons apt to use them for that purpose.

It is hoped that through the widespread cooperation of our members we can avoid a duplication of the Baltimore lead poisoning episode in other cities which would only result in additional alarming publicity to the injury of the lead industries.

Respectfully yours,

Secretary.

