

PVC Price's Up 2 Cents Today; OSHA Rule Limits PVC Output

Much of the polyvinyl chloride industry is increasing prices today, July 1, by an average 2c. per pound. This increase will lift the price at most companies to the 22c.-24c. per pound range, for bulk carload quantities. At the same time, many producers are reporting suddenly abundant supplies of monomer after a Fall, Winter and Spring of acute shortages, but operating rates are still below capacity due to the tightened OSHA standard on permissible VC gas levels in workplaces.

Among those implementing new prices, Stauffer is going up by 3c. per pound today (July 1) to a new level of 23c. per pound for suspension homopolymer, and 25c. per pound for copolymer, dispersions are now priced at 33c. and 35c. per pound respectively for homo and copolymers; Firestone is raising prices by 2c. per pound today, setting their suspension homopolymer at 22c. and copolymer at 24c. per pound.

Tenneco is also going up today, increasing prices by 2½c. per pound, placing homopolymer at 21c. and co-polymer at 23c. and dispersions at 31c. and 32c. respectively. Diamond Shamrock is going up by 3c. today, to 21c. for homopolymer suspension and 23c. per pound for copolymer; homopolymer dispersion is being lifted to 32c. per pound. Conoco is raising prices by 1½c. today, putting suspension resins at 21c. for homo and 23c. per pound for copolymer.

Uniroyal is increasing dispersion prices only today. The increase is 2c. per pound placing homo at 32c. and copolymer dispersion at 34c. per pound. Suspension resin prices remain at 20c. and 22c. per pound, but are being reviewed "daily" according to a spokesman.

ROBINTECH AT 24c.

Goodyear increased its PVC prices on June 15 by 2c. per pound. At that time homopolymer suspension was lifted to 22c. per pound and homopolymer dispersion was lifted to 32c. per pound.

Robintech is implementing a 4c. per pound increase today placing their homopolymer suspension price at 24c. per pound. Goodrich is also reported to be planning a 2c. per pound increase placing their homopolymer suspension at 22c. per pound, and dispersions at 32c. for homopolymer and 34c. for copolymer.

Effective July 15, Ethyl will increase its homo suspension resins, the only grade it markets, by 2c. per pound to 22c. per pound.

The price rises are attributed, of course, to increased monomer costs. VCM is widely priced at 10c. per pound, and higher, now. However, most PVC makers are reporting substantially eased supplies of monomer, and some are even reporting excess supplies which they are attempting to toll at less well endowed competitors.

But, despite increased monomer supplies, few companies are able to operate at potential. The 50 ppm emergency temporary standard adopted by OSHA in the spring is forcing most manufacturers to slowdown production. Generally, this has resulted in a cutback of 8-10 percent of potential, but at least two producers report that they have been forced to reduce operations by more than 10 percent of possible levels, one of them has been forced to cutback by as much as 25 percent. Yet both claim that they have adequate supplies of monomer to operate fully.

The producers claim that production rates become a secondary consideration, their first concern being to achieve and maintain low levels of VCM gas in order to forestall any government action against them and to appear cooperative so as to encourage OSHA to compromise on its proposed permanent standard of no-detectable levels.

If given time to adjust to what they consider "reasonable" gas levels, producers report that they may be able to scale production back up to levels "approaching" capacity. (For more information on the VC controversy and the OSHA hearings in Washington, see story on page 3).

Producers say prices are expected to continue to climb under these pressures some say to the high twenties by year-end.

Liver Cancer Victims Lived Near PVC Plants

Two "downwind cases" of angiosarcoma of the liver have been tentatively identified in Connecticut after review of the possible connection of vinyl chloride gas to record cancer deaths in the state. A story in the Connecticut Herald last Friday (June 28) quoted sources at National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health as saying that environment near two PVC fabrication plants in Connecticut was "highly suspected" as a factor in the two cases of liver cancer. This brings to four the total number of angiosarcoma deaths in the state that have been connected to PVC facilities.

The latest cases, according to the Connecticut newspaper, involved a woman who lived within a half a mile of a Ross & Roberts Company plant in Bridgeport.

Earlier in June, two PVC workers in the state, one from each of the same two plants, were identified as accounting for another two of the registered angiosarcoma deaths. There are a total of six such deaths recorded in the state cancer registry. The two remaining cases have not yet been connected to causative factors.

The Herald quoted NIOSH sources as saying "there is no other possible explanation for these cases of angiosarcoma except for residue in the neighborhood of these two plants." The source was said to base his comment on a report on the latest identified victims submitted by the National Cancer Institute.

/CM's Labor and Management n Confrontation at Hearings On 'Viable' Industry Standard

By RALPH L. CHERRY

Washington Editor

With jobs of possibly as many as 2.2 million workers at stake as well as the future of an entire plastics industry, officials of the Department of Labor this week begin sifting through a mass of research data, medical reports, statistical information and recommendations for a viable permanent standard for worker exposure to vinyl chloride contamination.

Four full days of public hearings on the issue by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) last week brought management and labor into direct confrontation over the stringency of the standard that should be imposed. Industry said that

OSHA's proposal that worker exposure (without protective equipment) be limited to undefeatable levels of vinyl chloride is not feasible. Labor said OSHA's proposal was not strict enough.

To give emphasis to labor's views, Peter Bonmarito, President of United Rubber Workers, speaking on behalf of the AFL-CIO said:

"This country survived for nearly two hundred years without polyvinyl chloride and we can survive in the future without it. If PVC cannot be made and used safely, then the proposed standard must be replaced by an orderly procedure to phase out vinyl chloride production and find substitutes for its products, or to phase out the products themselves."

Although the link between vinyl chloride contamination and angiosarcoma is still de-

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above 10 ppm would require use of practical and effective respiratory protection.

Mr. Vittone said that the industry's commitment to the proposed standard could not be accomplished overnight since, in certain areas, the technology for accomplishing it is, as yet, not developed and, when developed, facilities must be installed requiring time for engineering, procurement, and installation.

He emphasized that the industry committee is unanimous in its position that OSHA's proposed permanent standard of "no detectable level" is not technologically feasible and, if adopted, would shut down the industry.

Jerome H. Heckman, SPI's general counsel, emphasized that any final standard adopted by the government must take into balanced account the full spectrum of public and employee health considerations, social and economic impact, as well as other public interest factors.

He stressed that Congress specifically provided in the Occupational Safety & Health Act, and that the courts have so recognized, that the Secretary of Labor must, in establishing protective standards, consider the "feasibility" of meeting them. He said the term "feasibility" encompasses technological and economic considerations as well as health.

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ed by some scientists, evidence of its cancer-causing potential was strengthened further upon receipt of a telegram shortly before the hearings began from Dr. Cesare Maltoni of Italy reporting further on the experiments he is conducting of the effects of vinyl chloride contamination on rats.

He advised Assistant Secretary of Labor John Stender who supervises OSHA that "the up-to-date results indicate that VCM administered by inhalation produces in rats zymbal gland carcinomas, nephroblastomas, angiosarcomas of liver and other sites, skin carcinomas and probably hepatomas and neuroblastomas.

"In mice, VCM produces angiosarcomas and angiomas of the liver and of other sites, pulmonary tumors, mammary carcinomas and skin tumors."

Dr. Daniel P. Boyd, director of the Office of Standards Development for OSHA, who announced receipt of the telegram to the packed hearing, said, "Based upon the Maltoni and Industrial Bio-Test Laboratory experiments, and the 19 cases of angiosarcoma found in persons exposed to VCM, our present judgement is that VCM is a carcinogenic agent.

OPERATING WITH UNKNOWNNS

"In protecting employees from carcinogenic material, we are operating in an area of many unknowns. For example, we do not know the mechanism by which a chemical carcinogen operates or whether a safe level of exposure can be set. However, the problem of employee exposure to carcinogens is with us today, and it is our responsibility to deal with it as rapidly as possible, based upon the best available information."

A number of the chemical manufacturers were in attendance at the hearings, either as participants giving reports on their knowledge of the chemical's hazardous properties or as observers. The industry's principle arguments that the government act with reason and not destroy an industry whose products have a value of \$65 billion

annually were offered by the industry of the Plastics Industry.

The \$65 billion annual worth of the plastics industry and the 2.2 million job figure was contained in an economic study of the industry prepared for SPI by Arthur D. Little, Inc., management consultants.

In connection with establishment of a permanent standard, OSHA is preparing an economic impact statement which it hopes to complete in about a month. An environmental impact statement was completed earlier last month and is being reviewed for industry comments.

Anton Vittone, president of B.F. Goodrich Chemical Company, and chairman of the SPI's Committee of Vinyl Chloride Monomer & Polyvinyl Chloride Producers, warned OSHA that the plastics industry could not live with the proposed permanent standard that would reduce permissible worker exposure to vinyl chloride contaminated air from 50 parts per million to less than 1 ppm, plus or minus 50 percent. He offered a new standard for employee safety calling for a stepped reduction of permissible levels of VCM in the workplace as follows:

For PVC resin plants - Effective October 5, 1974, a ceiling of 40 ppm of VCM and a maximum daily time weighted average of 25 ppm. Levels above 40 ppm would require the use of practical and effective respiratory protection. One year later the ceiling would drop to 25 ppm with no time weighted average and on October 5, 1976, it would stay at 25 ppm with a maximum time weighted average of 10 ppm.

For VCM plants - Effective October 5, 1974, a ceiling of 25 ppm and a maximum time weighted average of 10 ppm. Levels above 25 ppm would require the utilization of practical and effective respiratory protection. One year later the ceiling would drop to 10 ppm and a maximum time weighted average of 5 ppm and levels

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ORTER

July 1, 1974

Handwritten signatures and initials, including "Vittone" and "J. H. Heckman".