

February 4, 1933

Mr. C. D. Hawley  
Ethyl Gasoline Corporation  
723 E. Milwaukee Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Mr. Hawley:

I am returning to you herewith the original letter which you handed me in Detroit, together with my reply to Mr. McKinley. I am sending my reply through Dr. Edgar in order that he may add any comments, or if he chooses in order that he may use my letter in composing one of his own to Mr. McKinley.

Very truly yours,

RAK:IS

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February 4, 1935

Mr. C. W. McKinley  
Chief Engineer  
A C Spark Plug Company  
Flint, Michigan

Dear Sir:

Your letter of January 24th concerning the toxic effects of Remo, addressed to Mr. C. D. Sawley of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation, has been referred to me.

In my opinion, it is a little bit difficult to make a comprehensive statement of the possible toxic effects of materials of the type contained in Remo, without producing a false impression. When one attempts to visualize the various uses to which any material might be put, and when one attempts to anticipate all of the possible ways in which it may be handled, it produces an impression of danger which is quite out of proportion to that which practical experience has shown to be true in relation to a large number of materials of this sort. Thus I believe the suggestion that the material be compared to some more familiar product of general use is a good one. Unfortunately it is a little bit difficult to do accurately. The material has a toxicity when taken by mouth which approximates that of Ethanol. However, it is not dangerous in this connection for the reason that nobody would consider drinking it. It is irritating to the skin to an extent which resembles the effect of gasoline. However, it varies from gasoline in that it does not give off dangerous vapors in the way that gasoline does. It is absorbed through the skin to some degree, but not to an extent which makes it practically dangerous. Taking all these facts into consideration, in my opinion its general toxic properties may be very satisfactorily likened to ordinary commercial paint removers, as was mentioned in your letter. As a matter of fact, it is somewhat less dangerous than the materials of this class which contain methyl alcohol. It is my opinion that under conditions of ordinary or even bad usage, it will be found to show no more apparent effects of harmfulness than have been shown by Prestone, a material to which one of the ingredients is very closely related. The materials are somewhat more toxic for experimental animals than is Prestone, but after some considerable experimentation, I have come to the conclusion

that very little practical difference will be noted. The only qualification which suggests itself to me is that a certain number of persons who have frequent contact with Remo may develop an irritated condition of the skin similar to that which is shown by a certain small proportion of individuals who are continually in contact with gasoline. General experience leads one to believe that practically all organic solvents will bring about dermatitis in the case of a certain few susceptible persons. For this reason, I should not wish to make the blanket claim that Remo will not produce any injury under any conditions. For this reason, I feel that persons who handle it should be advised against unnecessary spillage and skin contact.

I trust that the above comments will provide the means of making a suitable reply to Mr. Johnson of the Service Division of the Delco Appliance Corporation, and to any others who are disturbed about the possible dangerous effects of the handling of Remo.

Very truly yours,

RAK:IS