FROM (NAME—LOCATION—PHONE): D. R. Bishop - A3NB

file

DATE : October 1, 1981

SUBJECT :

REFERENCE :

cc: R. T. Berendt - E2ND
S. G. Collins - A3NC
G. Roush - G2WG

BC: G. D. Ingenthron - A3NB

TO : J. H. Craddock - A2SA
J. Ortiz - E2ND

Please see the attached from the New York Daily News.

Someone should give McCann a call and set him straight, i.e., amount legally permitted; the real threat in fires, and the dioxin reference.

The attempts to tie this in with Agent Orange are particularly bothersome. Is there any literature reference or test or some analytical test we might do to put the whole dioxin theory to rest. If, as I've been told, it's chemically impossible to form any of tha dioxins from tha Arochlors, we need to document this and communicate it.

DRB

Dan R. Bishop

DRB:ec

Attachment

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NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, Friday, Sept. 25, 1981 ★ 7

Says PCBs from Con Ed hurt firemen

By RUTH STOUT and PAUL MESKIL

Several firemen suffered skin rashes after they inhaled PCB-polluted smoke from transformer fires at Con Edison plants, a toxic-chemical expert testified yesterday.

Industrial hygienist Michael McCann said the sealed transformers contain PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), which are used to insulate and cool the transformers. He said the amount of PCBs legally allowed in the transformers is 10 times the amount permitted by federal regulations for use in the open air.

The PCBs pose a triple threat in fires, McCann said. They can be absorbed through the skin of people in the vicinity. They can be inhaled after evaporating into the air. And, at high temperatures, they change into other, even more toxic chemicals, one of which is believed to be dioxin, the hazardous ingredient of the military defoliant Agent Orange.

McCANN IS AN OFFICIAL of the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, a coalition of health professionals and labor unions, including the Uniformed Firefighters Association. At a hearing of the New York State Commission on Dioxin, he said: "Firefighters are being treated like Vietnam vets. They are being exposed to toxic chemicals and are not being told about it."

More than 100 Vietnam veterans attended the hearing at the Brooklyn War Memorial. Their problems included cancer, kidney and liver disorders, stomach cramps, chronic illness, numbness in the extremities, loss of sex drive, abnormal sensitivity to light, skin rashes and birth defects in their children.

Viet vet Fred Nachshen of Queens and his wife, Louise, were accompanied by their 5-year-old twins, one of whom has an open spine and walks with the aid of braces and crutches—the result, they charged, of birth defects caused by Nachshen's exposure to Agent Orange.

McCANN SAID THERE were four recent Con Ed transformer fires at which firemen were exposed to chemical contamination: July 7 at the Hell Gate plant in the Bronx; July 8 at a Con Ed facility in Brooklyn; July 11 at a Staten Island plant, and Sept. 19 at a plant on 14th St.

McCann said firemen have difficulty tracing the source of various health problems because Fire Department records seldom list the dangerous chemicals that may have been involved. ■

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