

File VCI - EPA

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EPA Data Withheld

Data from a study of vinyl chloride being conducted in Houston, Tex., are being withheld because of possible criminal prosecution, according to Federal officials. To determine the concentration of the chemical in the atmosphere, the Environmental Protection Agency is collecting air samples near chemical plants along the Houston Ship Channel.

An EPA lawyer in the agency's Dallas regional office said that the results of the Houston study would be withheld because the study "represents the investigation files of a law enforcement agency." Polluters releasing the gas could be subject to prosecution, he said.

Asked on what he based his legal authority to withhold the data, Jim Collins, the attorney, cited an exception to the Freedom of Information Act entitling law enforcement agencies to keep secret details of an investigation that might lead to criminal charges. The information would be released only after evaluation and possible legal disposition, Mr. Collins said.

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Convention Address	Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge

RELEASE TIME *
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Vinyl chloride, recently recognized as an occupational carcinogen, also causes acute liver injury in experimental animals previously given phenobarbital, or Aroclor 1254. Phenobarbital is a barbiturate classically used to control epilepsy, and Aroclor 1254 is one of a family of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) widely used in industry, for example, as insulators or plasticizers. Since vinyl chloride causes acute liver injury to normal animals only under extreme conditions, the susceptible animals must respond differently. One possibility is that vinyl chloride itself is not the toxic agent but that it is activated or metabolized into a reactive species and the susceptible animals are more capable of this activation. In our electron microscopic studies of the liver after vinyl chloride the membranes of the endoplasmic reticulum appeared to be primarily injured, and thus a likely site for the toxic activation of vinyl chloride. Located within the membranes of the endoplasmic reticulum is a multi-enzyme system responsible for the metabolism of drugs and most other foreign compounds and which is known to activate other chemicals into toxins. Treatment with phenobarbital or Aroclor 1254 alter or enhance components of this enzyme system. At its "heart" is an oxygen binding heme protein, called cytochrome P450 which binds the compound to be metabolized and participates in the necessary reaction with molecular oxygen. During the course of the metabolic oxidation of the compound, cytochrome P450 receives electrons from NADPH and NADH via different enzymatic pathways.

In order to investigate the role of these drug metabolizing enzymes in the activation of vinyl chloride to a toxin we fed rats 6 different chemicals (each a drug

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or an environmental contaminant) which were known to increase or alter the activity of different measurable components of this drug metabolizing system. Correlation between measurable changes in components of this drug metabolizing enzyme system and the subsequent degree of injury following exposure to vinyl chloride of animals previously treated with these chemicals, reveals that the degree of enhancement of both total content of the central molecule cytochrome P450 and the rate of electron transport from NADPH is directly related to the degree of liver injury caused by vinyl chloride. These findings are compatible with the activation of vinyl chloride to an epoxide, a reactive species, and could account for vinyl chloride's potential for liver injury and tumorigenesis.

Nippon Keizai Shinbun
(Nippon Economy Press) 2/6/76

Communication Conference to be held for the Ban of Plastics by
Eleven Consumer Groups

Eleven consumer groups which are investigating the disposal treatment problem, caused by the increased use of plastics, in connection with the toxicity of vinyl chloride held a meeting at the Consumer Center, Shinjyuku, Tokyo on the 5th and decided to organize a "Goodbye Plastics Communication Conference (tentative name)".

The initiators of the above communication conference are Japan League of Consumers, Association of Housewives (Shuhuren) as well as consumer groups of metropolitan districts. It is planned to be a loose (non-tight) league so that the format of the movement does not constrict the individual groups and they say the ultimate objective is "to ban plastics in all phases of clothing, food and housing.

They plan to have a ceremony for the foundation of the conference this coming 25th at Shinjyuku and also determine the short-term policies for the movement. This year the emphasis will be put on the ban of vinyl chloride.

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Asahi Shinbun (Tokyo District) (Asahi Press) 12/17/75

Polystyrene Containers: The Tumor-causing theory is denied from a safety test by a British Research Institute

An issue has been raised that the containers made of polystyrene, which is one kind of plastic, is suspected to cause tumor in mice. This was reported by Sakae Sakashita, an assistant, Department of Medicine of Mie University at a conference held in Nagoya last November 29. He puts 80°C water into polystyrene cups and after overnight standing gives the water to mice. After two years of repetition he says four out of seven mice have developed tumor in neck and stomach.

In response to this the main office of Yakuruto (Tokyo) which uses such containers has asked the Huntingdon Research Institute of England to carry out the safety test and has recently published its results. According to that polystyrene cannot be considered to cause tumor.

The Huntingdon Research Institute is a designated research institute of World Health Organization (WHO). The test employed 180 mice. It is different from the method of Assistant Sakashita in that they crushed the containers into fine particles and mixed them into the feed by 5% and gave it to mice for two years. For the control the other mice were given ordinary feed only.

The result showed no difference in percentage of tumor development between the mice that were fed 5% of polystyrene and those that were fed ordinary feed. Investigation of heart, lung and liver showed no particular increase of anomaly in those mice that were given polystyrene, according to the result.

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Nippon Shohi Keizai Shinbun
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Seminar on Safety of Food Containers to be held by Association
of Housewives on 28th

The Association of Housewives (Shuhuren) which has been boycotting polyvinylchloride food containers plans to take up the problem of food containers as a subject of this year's 19th annual Consumer's Seminar and look into the safeties of plastic food containers not limited to those of polyvinylchloride.

This Seminar is held in late January every year by the delegates representing various branching organizations that exist in the country and it carries out a thorough research and discussion on a subject that is most important in that year. In the past the subject of the Seminar not only became the main theme of the Shuhuren's movement for the year but also put important influences on the movements of other organizations.

In this year's Seminar which will be held on 28th between 10:30 and 3:30 p.m. the theme will be focused on the problems of safety, label specification and disposal treatment of the plastic containers upon which the concern has rapidly built up in connection with the carcinogenicity of vinylchloride monomer.

Representatives from the related government offices such as Department of Health, Department of Industry and Commerce and Department of Agriculture will attend the Seminar. From the industry side the Polyvinylchloride Association and Polyolefin Association will attend. Also including the experts, they will pursue a comprehensive investigation of the problem of food containers.

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Shuhuren has been boycotting foods in polyvinylchloride containers since last year on the ground that they have a risk of containing the monomer which is regarded as carcinogenic. The organization has decided to hold this special seminar in order to investigate whether the containers made of other materials than polyvinylchloride, such as polyethylene and polystyrene, are actually safe or not.

Some of the people have the opinion that not only polyvinylchloride but also other poly-type containers contain toxic materials. Thus the opinion has begun to emerge that a direction has to be taken in the future toward the ban of all the plastic food containers. In view of this it is noteworthy that Shuhuren has started a serious study of the safety problem of the plastic containers.

It seems that the safety problem of the plastics is going to be a major topic of the consumer's movements this year.

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