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NIOSH-OSHA TEAM TO DISPUTE UNION CARBIDE DATA, ANALYSIS OF BRAIN TUMORS:

A team of Government investigators headed by Dr. Richard Waxweiler of NIOSH and Dr. Victor Alexander of OSHA expect to publish shortly (perhaps in *Lancet* or the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*) an updated version of their epidemiological investigation of brain tumors at Union Carbide's facility in Texas City, Tex.

The company recently acknowledged that a nearly two-fold excess risk of brain tumor existed among workers at the plant but that no occupational link could be found and therefore the excess must be considered a chance possibility.

The company reported 12 deaths due to primary malignant brain cancer and by comparison with national rates 7.42 would have been expected. The company considered all deaths of employees working at Texas City from 1941 through 1977 but confined the survey only to white male employees.

By contrast, the Government investigators studied all male employees, white and non-white, and carried their study through 1979. Using those yardsticks, the Government will report on incidence of 23 cases of brain tumors compared to an expected incidence of 10 cases. A NIOSH official familiar with the study told us the difference could be accounted for almost entirely by the inclusion of non-white workers and extension of the survey period for two years.

In addition, the Government investigators will challenge the Carbide hypothesis that the increased incidence is due a chance possibility. That may be true, but there is also the distinct possibility that some chemical or chemicals in the plant may be responsible and should be investigated, they say.

The company and NIOSH have been conducting separate studies but using the same data base. Carbide has informed its employees that no correlation could be found between brain cancer cases and employee exposure to chemicals used or manufactured in the plant.

It said that the over-all mortality rate of employees working at Texas City since 1941 is significantly less than the national average (765 observed vs. 923.82 expected) and that of the 765 deaths which occurred among 6,588 employees, 12 were due to primary malignant brain cancer and that, finally, no correlation could be found between brain cancer cases and employee exposure to chemicals used or manufactured at the Texas City plant.

In a letter mailed to each employee of the Texas City facility, plant manager Damon L. Engle and plant physician Dr. David H. Glenn stated that they believe the four to five cases of brain cancer "may represent a chance occurrence and that these cases are not due to chemical exposure at our plant," because,

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they said:

"First, we have not been able to associate these brain cancer cases with any particular chemical exposure. Second, the types of brain cancer are present in the same percentages as that seen in the general population. Ordinarily, chemically caused cancer is a specific and often unusual type, different than those seen in the general population. Finally, excessive brain cancer has not been confirmed in chemical plants similar to ours in other parts of the country."

"Brain tumors," it continues, "are a rare cause of death and while there must be concern over any increase in incidence, there is no cause for alarm based on the results of this study."

HERE'S A SWITCH—OMB OFFICIAL URGES SHIFT OF OSHA TO MERGE WITH NIOSH:

It's not unusual for someone to recommend the transfer of NIOSH to the Labor Department in a merger with OSHA.

But now a high-ranking official of the Office of Management and Budget suggests, in a view he describes as his own and not necessarily that of OMB, that OSHA be transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services and merged with NIOSH.

What is intriguing is not only that it came from John F. Morrall III, Deputy Chief of Social Regulation in OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (again emphasizing that it was his personal view) but that it was presented at a conference on government regulation sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute for Policy Research, a think tank which has given the Reagan Administration some of its top officials and philosophy.

Morrall said that a combination of the significant risk test provided by the Supreme Court's ruling on benzene and the use of cost-effectiveness analysis called for in its cotton dust decision, could produce most of the public policy improvement expected from a cost-benefit requirement, which the Supreme Court ruled out. Detailed examinations for individual OSHA regulations—coke ovens, benzene, acrylonitrile and cotton dust in particular—illustrate the potential improvement from such a strategy, he said.

"Although much can be done administratively," he said, "it can be accomplished mainly by reducing costs, not increasing benefits. Furthermore, a change in administrations could quickly lead us in the opposite direction. To assure more lasting reform, one that actually produces significant occupational safety and health benefits, legislation is needed. I recommend the following:

"(1) Merge OSHA into NIOSH at HHS where it can concentrate more on promoting occupational health and less on safety and labor issues such as pay, seniority and comfort.

"(2) Require cost-benefit balancing so that . . . more extensive cost-beneficial regulation can replace intensive inefficient regulation.

"(3) Press for reform of workers' compensation (experience rating, co-insurance and deductibles) to create incentives for firms to provide safer workplaces.

"(4) To deal with society's financial interest in reducing health and safety risks, reform the institutions that create these externalities since they create them for all risky situations, both in and outside the workplace.

In a subsequent interview with *OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY LETTER*, Morrall said one objective of moving OSHA into HHS and a merger with NIOSH would be to make the program more scientific and less responsive to the demands of labor. From a regulatory standpoint, he said, OSHA is currently moving in the direction sought by the Administration, is concentrating inspections and enforcement on companies with the worst safety records but that his suggestion for legislation transferring OSHA to NIOSH was predicated on the possibility that a subsequent Administration might reverse that trend by administrative action. From a practical standpoint, however, he acknowledged that such a move would probably prove politically infeasible.

OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES DECLINED IN 1980:

Job-related injuries and illnesses declined in 1980, the last year of the Carter Administration, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in its annual survey.

About one injury or illness occurred for every 12 workers in the private sector during 1980, compared

CURRENT STATUS OF OSHA HEALTH REGULATIONS

Regulation	Date Proposed	Date Issued	Effective ¹ Date	Status of Legal Challenge	Under Review
Asbestos	1-12-72	6-7-72	7-1-76	affirmed by Circuit Court of Appeals 4-17-74	Yes ²
14 carcinogens	7-16-72	1-29-74	3-1-74	denied by Supreme Court 10-6-75	No
Vinyl chloride	1-30-74	10-4-74	4-1-75	denied by Supreme Court 5-27-75	No
Coke oven emissions	7-24-75	10-22-76	1-20-80	withdrawn from Supreme Court on 8-26-80	No
Benzene	5-3-77	2-10-78	6-27-81	overturned by Supreme Court 7-2-80	No
DBCP	9-9-77	3-17-78	4-17-78	none	No
Arsenic	1-21-75	5-5-78	12-31-79	remanded to OSHA by Circuit Court 4-7-81	Yes
Cotton dust	12-20-76	6-23-78	3-27-84	affirmed by Supreme Court 6-17-81	Yes
Acrylonitrile	1-17-78	10-3-78	11-2-80	none	No
Lead	10-3-75	11-4-78	3-1-89	partially remanded by Circuit Court 8-5-80	Yes
Cancer policy	10-4-77	1-22-80	4-21-80	revised to reflect Supreme Court decision 1-19-81, petitions filed	Yes ³
Hearing conservation	10-24-74	8-21-81	8-22-81	petitions filed	Yes ³

¹ Last date of final provisions. Less stringent provisions usually effective shortly after promulgation.
² On 10-7-75 OSHA proposed a tighter standard which is still under consideration.
³ Some provisions of 1-16-81 standard still stayed; provisions for engineering controls still under consideration.

with the ratio of one out of 11 in each of the four previous years.

The latest survey shows that all measures—incidence rates and estimates of number of cases for total private sector industries—fell for the first time in five years. The all-industry incidence rate fell from 9.5 injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers in 1979 to 8.7 in 1980. About 10 percent of the 0.8 decline in the incidence rate was the result of a decrease in total hours worked between 1979 and 1980.

In 1980, work-related deaths in units with 11 or more employees also fell—from 4,950 in 1979 to 4,400 in 1980. The fatality rate fell from 8.6 per 100,000 workers in 1979 to 7.7 in 1980. Over the 1979-80 period, 30 percent of all occupational fatalities were associated with the operation of cars and trucks. The remainder were from heart attacks; industrial vehicles or equipment; falls; electrocutions; aircraft crashes; struck by objects other than vehicles or equipment; plant machinery operations; gunshots; caught in, under or between objects; fires; explosions; and gas inhalation.

BLS acknowledged that the data on occupational illnesses continues to be underestimated because of problems in measurement. Thus, the annual survey includes data only on the incidence of visible illnesses of workers. For purposes of the survey, occupational illnesses include any abnormal condition or disorder, other than one resulting from an occupational injury, caused by exposure to environmental factors associated with employment. The incidence of occupational illnesses measured by the annual survey refers to the number of new illness cases occurring during a year and does not measure continuing conditions of illness reported in previous surveys.

With that caveat, nearly 130,000 occupational illnesses were recognized in 1980; the number recognized in 1979 was 148,000. During this period, the number of illnesses decreased in seven of the eight industry divisions, increasing only in the single category of agriculture, forestry and fishing.

As in previous years, skin diseases or disorders continued to account for the majority of illnesses—about four of every ten cases. BLS said this is largely because they are more readily observable than other illnesses.

* * * * *

Here are other key highlights:

* The number of job-related injuries dropped by about half a million—from nearly 6 million in 1979 to 5.5 million in 1980. Nearly 20 percent of the drop in injuries can be attributed to the decrease in total hours worked from 1979 to 1980.

* The number of injuries involving lost workdays dropped from 2.7 million to 2.5 million.

* The incidence rate for injuries involving lost workdays reversed a four-year upward trend by declining from 4.2 in 1979 to 3.9 in 1980.

* About 40.9 million lost workdays resulted from work-related injuries—down from 42.6 million in 1979. The number of lost workdays per 100 full-time workers fell from 66.2 to 63.7. However, the average number of lost workdays per lost workday injury remained unchanged at 16 days.

* * * * *

The survey covers eight industry divisions: agriculture, forestry and fishing; mining (independent contractors who perform services or construction on mining sites are included); construction; manufacturing; transportation and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance and real estate; services. Only companies with 11 or more employees in the private sector are covered by the survey.

The lowest injury rate—1.9 per 100 full-time workers—was found in the finance, insurance and real estate industry. The highest injury rate—15.5 per 100 full-time workers—was in construction.

* * * * *

Assistant Secretary of Labor Thorne G. Auchter used the encouraging news as a further justification for his policy of concentrating enforcement activity on high-risk industries. He expressed "delight" in the first reversal in the statistical trend in five years, then commented:

"All of us in the business of striving to improve safety and health conditions on the job should be heartened by these new data. They demonstrate that job injury and illness is not the intractable problem some have claimed it is. Improvements can be made. And further improvements will be made as we continue OSHA's basic policy of concentrating our attention on safety and health problems in the individual establishments with the greatest injury rates.

"The data clearly reinforce both our recently adopted policy of targeting OSHA scheduled inspections in the establishments with higher rates and our determination that all of OSHA's actions must have a positive impact at the workplace level.

"On the other hand, we should not sit back complacently because much remains to be done. Workplace injuries and illnesses are expensive. Their cost in human suffering and dollars is appalling. We can't measure suffering, but for 1980, the National Safety Council estimates a total cost to the nation of \$30.2 billion for workplace accidents.

"Meanwhile, I urge employers and employees alike to continue to work together to eliminate or reduce workplace hazards. We can no longer afford to act as adversaries in the safety and health arena. We must continue to forge closer bonds so we can become a more effective team—labor and management and government versus hazards—rather than expanding our energies and resources fighting among ourselves."

Note: As a result of the BLS data, OSHA will use the 1980 rate of 5.2 lost workday injury rate as a basis for comparison in determining which industries are targeted for its inspection, compared to the 1979 rate of 5.7.

DR. LEBRUN APPOINTED MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF WORLD BANK, IMF:

Dr. Andre Lebrun, former corporate medical director of FMC Corp., Philadelphia, has been appointed medical director of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, headquartered in Washington.

James H. Senger has been named to the new post of Director of Environmental Health at Monsanto, in charge of the company's staffs in industrial hygiene, medical and environmental health information, toxicology, quality assurance and the Environmental Health Lab; he was formerly general manager in the technical division for the Monsanto Agricultural Products Co.

Bailus Walker, Jr., former head of health standards at OSHA and now Michigan Director of Public Health, has been elected to a four-year term on the executive board of the American Public Health Association; Dr. John J. Hanlon, former Assistant Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service and veteran of more than 40 years in public health, received the newly established Award for Excellence in Health Administration from APHA; Dwight Metzler, an environmental health pioneer and former Secretary of Health and Environment in Kansas, received the 1981 Sedgwick Memorial Medical for Distinguished Service in Public Health.

Obit: Dr. Robert Wade Speir, 53, medical director-technology for New York Telephone Co. in charge of relating advances in technology to the health of the company's 80,000 employees, was killed in an auto accident in New Jersey last month. He was a leader in the company's occupational and environmental health programs and in the use of outside labs in clinical work for the company.

OSHA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON CALIFORNIA'S EDB STANDARD:

OSHA is requesting public comment shortly on California's worker exposure standard of 0.13 parts per million of ethylene dibromide (EDB), the fumigant used to control Medflies in that state and elsewhere.

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The California standard is both a 15-minute and an eight-hour time-weighted average. Although it is in effect, the state standard must be approved by OSHA to determine if it is "at least as effective" as the federal regulation.

EDB has become a hot political issue both in Washington and in California. Agriculture Department officials had urged its use against the Medfly outbreak, but state officials under Gov. Jerry Brown were reluctant to use it. Amid the controversy, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters filed a petition with OSHA seeking an emergency temporary standard on EDB and advised its members to refuse to handle fruit treated with it until it is proven safe to do so (*OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY LETTER*, Sept. 22).

Meanwhile, NIOSH has published a Current Intelligence Bulletin reaffirming its earlier recommendation that EDB be treated as a possible carcinogen and restating its recommendation for a maximum exposure of 0.13 ppm (as in California). The current OSHA standard is 20 ppm for an eight-hour workshift, with a maximum of 30 ppm for any 15-minute period.

"It appears that the California standard is at least as effective as the comparable Federal standard and, in many respects more stringent," OSHA commented in the Federal Register of Nov. 20. "Under the Act and pertinent regulations, states are permitted to adopt standards which are more stringent than the comparable Federal standards. However, Section 18(c)(2) of the Act and regulation 1902.3(c)(2) provide that state standards which are different from Federal standards and applicable to products which are distributed or used in interstate commerce, must be required by compelling local conditions and not unduly burden interstate commerce.

"Because concerns have been raised that this product standard limitation may be applicable to the California EDB standard, OSHA is seeking through this notice public comment as to whether the California standard is applicable to products which are distributed or used in interstate commerce and, if so, whether it is required by compelling local conditions and does not unduly burden interstate commerce."

Comments and requests for a hearing should be submitted by December 21 to the Director, Federal Compliance and Safety Programs, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Room N-3613, 200 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. Pat Horn at the above address is project officer.

HARD-PRESSED EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS TO DISCUSS CHANGING RULES:

The financially strapped Educational Resource Centers, created to provide training for occupational health personnel, will meet Nov. 23-24 with NIOSH officials in Atlanta to discuss possible changes in NIOSH requirements as a means of compensating for reduced funding.

The 10 ERCs had been granted \$10 million until the current fiscal year. At present the House has approved a \$7 million allocation for the ERCs in the current fiscal year budget, and the Senate has approved \$6 million. The HHS budget has not been finally passed by Congress. Grant applications for continuing awards in fiscal 1982 must be received by January 2, 1982.

To compensate for the obvious loss of funds no matter which of the two figures is ultimately adopted, the ERC directors will discuss with NIOSH a possible change in its regulations, which now require that four core disciplines be included in all programs: occupational medicine, industrial hygiene, safety and nursing. Some of the ERCs would like to have greater flexibility in eliminating one or more of those disciplines in view of the funding problem.

Note: Dr. J. Donald Millar, Director of NIOSH, has appointed a six-member search committee to screen and recommend a successor to Dr. James Merchant, who is leaving as Director of NIOSH's Appalachian center in Morgantown, W.Va., to join the faculty of the University of Iowa Medical Center. Dr. Elliott Harris, Deputy Director of NIOSH, is chairman of the search committee, which includes governmental and non-governmental persons. On another note, Dr. Millar said it is not planned to reduce the number of regional NIOSH offices as a result of budgetary cuts.

PUBLIC VIEWS SOUGHT ON ADDITIONAL FORMALDEHYDE DATA:

The Consumer Product Safety Commission is seeking public comment on its review of additional scientific and economic data on the hazard of urea-formaldehyde foam insulation. CPSC on February 5

proposed a rule that would have banned its use as a hazardous product under Section 8 of the Consumer Product Safety Act, then agreed to an additional period of public comment for the additional data, giving itself until Feb. 15, 1982 to issue a final ban or withdraw the ban.

As published in the Federal Register of Nov. 18, CPSC discussed an analysis of a final report by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, which reviewed earlier reports of scientific panels from the Franklin Institute Research Lab—agreeing with some conclusions and disputing others.

Based in part on the new information projected from the ORNL study and other new data, CPSC staff performed a revised risk assessment predicting the risk of cancer to consumers resulting from the release of formaldehyde gas from urea-formaldehyde foam insulation in their residences. CPSC said:

"Using the data from actual measurements in residences, the revised risk assessment estimates an upper value of risk of 89 cancers developing among the estimated population of 1.75 million individuals currently exposed in 500,000 U.F. foam insulated homes. This upper estimate of risk can also be expressed as follows:

"Any individual living in a home with U.F. foam insulation for nine years after installation would, according to the assessment, have an additional risk of 51 in a million of developing cancer from the formaldehyde released by the insulation. Further, if 260,000 people are assumed to be exposed from new installations (assuming 75,000 installations of U.F. foam insulation each year in the future), then up to 13 additional cancers could result from each year of new installations.

"Given the uncertainty of the annual number of installations of U.F. foam insulation in the future, this risk may be expressed as 1.8 additional cases of cancer from every 10,000 residences insulated."

As before, the upper estimates of risk in the revised assessment assume that formaldehyde is able to interact with other environmental carcinogens and carcinogenic processes within the human body in causing the development of cancer.

The Commission's Directorate for Health Sciences considers the upper estimate of risk to be a more likely estimate than the lower estimate of risk since formaldehyde has the ability to interact with genetic material. The lower estimates of risk, which are derived from the assumption that formaldehyde does not interact with other carcinogens and carcinogenic processes, are essentially zero for exposure sources.

"The Commission's Directorate for Health Sciences considers these lower estimates to be unlikely and contrary to the available biological evidence," CPSC commented.

The Federal Register notice also considered such factors as economic considerations, energy savings and real estate values. It invited comment on these criteria as well as the scientific analysis.

Comments should be mailed (preferably in five copies) no later than December 18 to the Office of the Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207. For further information, contact Harry Cohen, Office of Program Management, CPSC, at the above address; (301) 492-6453.

METHOD OF RANKING ANIMAL CARCINOGENS FOR REGULATORY PURPOSES PROPOSED:

A method of ranking animal carcinogens, according to the most relevant toxicological evidence derived from animal and genotoxicity studies, for purposes of regulation has been suggested by Dr. Robert A. Squire, associate professor of comparative medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and former acting director of the Carcinogenesis Testing Program and head of the Tumor Pathology Section of the National Cancer Institute.

The method assigns scores, or numerical ratings, according to responses of the animals to the following six criteria: number of different species affected; number of histogenetically different types of neoplasms in one or more species; spontaneous incidence in appropriate control groups of neoplasms induced in treated groups; dose-response relationships (cumulative oral dose equivalents per kilogram of body weight per day for two years); malignancy of induced neoplasms; genotoxicity, measured in an appropriate battery of tests.

Based on the proposed system, Dr. Squire ranked ten animal carcinogens and came up with the following results: aflatoxin (score 100); dimethylnitrosamine (95); vinyl chloride (90); TRIS (90); 2-naphthylamine (81); chloroform (65); NTA (51); chlordane (40); saccharin (36); DDT (31).

"The assertion that all animal carcinogens pose equal threats to human health cannot continue without risking a greater skepticism for regulatory decisions," Dr. Squire wrote in "Science" (Nov. 20). "... A system by which selected animal carcinogens could be ranked semi-quantitatively may be a useful regulatory

alternative to current methods. It may not be possible to rank all animal carcinogens in a scientifically valid manner, even if this were desired.

"Many have had limited or inadequate testing. Others, such as hormones, may be considered to operate through a relatively unique (though unclear) mechanism, and a system based on traditional toxicological measurements may be considered inappropriate. In many instances, however, where testing has been adequate and equivalent, a ranking scheme may assist in interpreting toxicological data for health risk assessment and regulatory policy."

NEW YORK BUSINESS GROUP ON HEALTH GETS GRANT TO AID SMALL BUSINESSES:

The New York Business Group on Health, whose executive director is Dr. Leon J. Warshaw, has received a grant of \$99,222 from the John A. Hartford Foundation to help small businesses identify and evaluate health-related problems.

The project, which will be launched on January 1, 1982 and run for at least a year, is based on the fact that small business managers are confronted by the same health-related problems as larger corporations—but don't have the time or resources to deal with them and still run their businesses.

Initially, the project will identify and establish the relative priority of small businesses' health-related concerns, designed to lead to the publication of a guide to the health-related services and consultants available in the community. At the same time, the project will design and conduct a basic course in benefits management aimed specifically at the small business manager and publish a benefits management manual that will serve as a workbook for duplication of the course by business-health coalitions in the U.S.

GM FINDS HIGH CANCER RATES AMONG MODEL SHOP WORKERS:

Workers in General Motors model shop developed colon and rectal cancers at nearly three times the national rate, the company announced following a year-long study.

The study included 5,007 current or former workers in the model shops, where wooden mock-ups are made of cars in the design stage. A second round of screening tests will be conducted among the same group for another year to affirm or challenge the findings.

Nevertheless, a GM spokesman said tests thus far had "given us absolutely no reason to suspect that there is an agent in the workplace to cause this."

The medical examinations were reviewed by Dr. Victor M. Hawthorne of the University of Michigan Medical School. They disclosed nine cases of colon and rectal cancer, compared to an expected national incidence of 3.14 cases.

Dr. Hawthorne declined to speculate on a possible occupational etiology but said that workers' diets and drinking and smoking habits could be linked to the high incidence of cancer. Owen Bieber, vice president of the United Auto Workers, said the union was greatly concerned by the findings and would continue to cooperate in determining the causes.

PRIORITIES SET FOR STANDARDS REVIEW IN METAL AND NONMETAL MINING:

The Mine Safety and Health Administration has disclosed priorities for its comprehensive standards review of regulations covering metal and nonmetal mining and milling operations. MSHA intends to hold public hearings throughout the country on the standards initially selected for regulatory relief and reevaluation. The following initial priorities for standards have been set:

Ground control, fire prevention, air quality, explosives, loading-hauling-dumping, electricity, material equipment storage and handling, and gassy mines. As the next step, the appropriate standards development committees will hold open hearings on sections covering those priorities.

FIRE FIGHTERS UNION PLEDGES NEW FIGHT ON OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS:

President John A. Gannon of the 170,000-member International Association of Firefighters said the death rate for fire fighters continued "at an altogether too high rate of 61 line-of-duty deaths per 100,000"

in 1980 and pledged his union to a new fight on occupational hazards.

"Another 98 fire fighters died as a result of occupational illnesses," he told a symposium on occupational health and hazards sponsored by OSHA and the United States Fire Administration. "Translating these figures into statistics, we find 61 line-of-duty deaths per 100,000, the highest of any occupation in this country." He said that his union's survey found 46,260 members reported injuries and that 34,562 of them occurred at the emergency scene; 480 forced retirements were due to occupational illnesses, and 338 forced retirements were due to line-of-duty injuries.

FUR & LEATHER WORKER UNION WINS RIGHT-TO-KNOW VICTORY:

United Food & Commercial Workers Local 1 (Fur, Leather & Machine Workers Joint Board), representing employees of the Wilmington (Del.) Chemical Co., recently won provisions in a contract guaranteeing workers the right to know about job hazards, and requiring the company to conduct monthly air sampling for toxic substances, giving safety committee members time off with pay to investigate health and safety problems and allowing workers to refuse unsafe work.

The company produces epoxies and leather finishes. Union members reportedly have developed skin disorders as the principal complaint. The new rights are in a "supplementary memo of agreement" negotiated after the last contract was signed.

CHAMBER OFFICIAL URGES BUSINESS AND LABOR TO JOIN IN SUPPORT OF OSHA:

Both organized labor and business should reassess their attitudes toward OSHA in the light of its new policy directions, says Mark A. de Bernardo, a law attorney for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and executive of its OSHA task force. And he left no doubt that he believes both groups should join in support of the new directions.

Under Thorne Auchter, said de Bernardo, OSHA has put out "the welcome mat to all parties to participate in the regulatory process," he told the American Boiler Manufacturers Association. He said that OSHA is rapidly developing a "rapport with the industrial community and a reputation for reasonableness and, yes, objectivity, in its regulatory approach."

He said that the cooperation of labor has been "minimal," said he feared organized labor may not be "interested in seeing the Auchter innovations succeed." That would appear to us to be an understatement.

But he added that he also found "perhaps even more alarming," that the business community, out of frustration with earlier OSHA administrations, may choose to "sit back passively" and assume that the agency is in "good hands" and that others would support its efforts.

"Now is the time to return to the fold," de Bernardo said. "Thorne Auchter's door really is open. OSHA is willing to listen to business' views."

HERE ARE A FEW NIOSH PUBLICATIONS OF WIDE INTEREST:

NIOSH has recently published several reports which will be of interest to the occupational health and safety community.

- * Work Practices Guide for Manual Lifting, summarizing research and presenting recommendations to control the various types of hazards associated with the unaided act of two-handed lifting of an object of known weight and size, as well as other relevant information on safe lifting and the training of workers who perform manual materials handling. (DHHS-NIOSH Publication No. 81-122).

- * Control Technology in the Plastics and Resins Industry, proceedings of a symposium in Atlanta Feb. 27-28, 1979. (DHHS-NIOSH Publication No. 81-107).

- * The Twenty-Four Hour Workday, proceedings of a symposium on variations in work-sleep schedules, including possible health hazards of shift work, held in San Diego Sept. 19-23, 1979, jointly with the Office of Naval Research. (DHHS-NIOSH Publication No. 81-127)

Confessions of One 'Inside-Dope Addict'

By Joanne Omang
Washington Post Staff Writer

Long before there was an Environmental Protection Agency, Gershon Fishbein made a living telling people what they needed to know about environmental issues.

His Environmental Health Letter marked its 20th anniversary last month, the oldest in the environmental business and the flagship of a one-man fleet of newsletters that has prospered in a field littered with failed publications.

Now there are hundreds of newsletters, specializing in technical minutiae and behind-the-scenes reporting within every industry, scientific and governmental subdivision. The Newsletter Clearinghouse Directory lists 2,400 newsletters in 150 categories, and about 400 of them are based in Washington, watching federal agencies at very close range. At least 50 specialize in environmental news, and customers include

their targets: EPA, for instance, subscribes to 30 newsletters, according to an agency official.

"Somebody once called us the 4th-and-a-half estate," Fishbein said in a recent interview. Little known outside their fields, the newsletters rarely spark Hill hearings or win big prizes for their investigative work, even though major newspapers often get tips or ideas for whole stories from them.

The majority are run by a few people who work hard for not too much money. If the newsletters survive the first two years, they tend to grow into multi-publication operations, according to Fred Goss, executive director of the Newsletter Publishers Association.

"Basically we're all inside-dope addicts," Fishbein said.

McGraw Hill's Washington Report on Medicine and Health launched newslettering in that field in 1947. Fishbein's was next, and then came the Business Pub-

lisher's Air/Water Pollution Report in 1963 and the Washington Drug Letter in 1969.

"The big explosion was in the mid-60s with the Great Society and the growing demand for specialized information," Goss said. The Bureau of National Affairs alone now has six environment-related publications.

Fishbein started his newsletter at the age of 40, when he decided that he didn't want to work for some one else anymore. A former reporter and editor at The Washington Post, Associated Press and the New York Herald Tribune, he was running the Washington office of the Medical Tribune, a magazine for doctors, when Congress began reorganizing the Public Health Service.

"It was old [former Democratic representative] John Fogarty of Rhode Island who suggested it," Fishbein recalled. The introductory issue accurately predicted that a new Bureau of Environmen-



GERSHON FISHBEIN
... environmental newsletter turns 20

tal Health would soon be set up within the Public Health Service.

He sent the issue to a list of 2,000 potential subscribers, offering it for \$50 a year, and got 125 buyers, a good return. Now EPA has 10,000 employees and Fishbein's newsletter, still bimonthly, sells for \$110 a year. His empire now includes the Occupational Safety and Health Newsletter and the Genetic Engineering Letter.