

IMPORTANCE OF PERIODIC MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

One of the most important elements of a program of protecting health of workers in dusty occupations is the periodic medical examination. The lack of scientific information regarding all aspects of asbestosis is serious. This cannot be over-emphasized. The obvious procedure to help overcome this deficiency is to employ every tool now available that will throw more light on the facts. The importance of the periodic medical x-ray examination can perhaps best be emphasized by stating that dust count investigations cannot, in the present state of knowledge, give us assurance as to the extent of our success in eliminating the hazard.

Regular examinations serve to protect the worker by giving early indication of health impairment due to dust, and permit intelligent action to be taken to avoid further serious health deterioration. This is particularly true if the detection is early enough and there is no progression to late stage asbestosis.

More important, for the long term, the accumulation of factual information regarding the health status of exposed workers, statistically interpreted in relation to dustiness studies and to mechanical developments in dust control equipment, will eventually indicate when the battle of asbestosis control is being won. This aspect of the problem is elaborated in the following section.

The inventory provided by such a medical program is just as important to intelligent action in this problem, as material inventories are to the proper conduct of business.