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The Decade Of Job Safety:

A SPECIAL REPORT



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Painters & Allied Trades Journal

On the Cover

IBPAT's efforts in making our trade safer continue as a series of special reports in this issue show.

NEWS AND FEATURES

page

- Inside Front Cover From the General President
- 4 Brain, Nerve Disease Causes Identified
 - 8 First World Painting Health Parley Held
 - 21 Minutes of the General Executive Board
 - 31 The GST Reports

DEPARTMENTS

page

- 15 Local and District Council News
- 19 Labor Beat
- 25 Sports and Recreation
- 26 Financial Report

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TILE • PAINT AND VARNISH MAKING
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The Decade of Job Safety

Brain, Nerve Disease Cause

When the Mount Sinai School of Medicine began its investigation to expose the culprits of the painting trade responsible for death and suffering among painters and allied tradesmen, the researchers assumed they would finish in two years. Instead, it took three years.

When the typewriters lay silent, the charts finished, the figures totaled and re-totaled and the furor of analytic cogitations finally ceased, the MSSM detectives gave their conclusion.

the foregoing report clearly demonstrates the existence of significant health hazards in the painting trades.

The contents of that report detail the disorders and diseases found among painters and allied tradesmen in five major areas:

- the *neurological* disorders and diseases of the brain and nervous system;

- the *respiratory* disorders and diseases of the nose, throat, mouth, and lungs and bronchial and tracheal tubes;

- the *digestive* disorders and diseases of the stomach and intestines;

- the *organ* disorders and diseases of the heart, liver and kidneys; and

- the *miscellaneous* disorders and diseases of all other parts of the body not listed in any group above.

Also specified in the report are the chemical culprits allegedly responsible for the disorders and diseases which have plagued painters and allied tradesmen.

This month the findings of the MSSM detectives concerning the neurological disorders and diseases of the brain and central nervous system will be examined in detail. Respiratory, digestive, organ and the miscellaneous disorders and diseases will be discussed in later articles.

Culprits held to blame most often for the neurological disorders and diseases are a long list of solvents, no doubt familiar to most painters and tradesmen. In alphabetical order, that list includes alcohols, aliphatic hydrocarbons, aromatic hydrocarbons, esters, glycols, ketones, methylene chloride, mineral spirits, naphtha, toluene, turpentine and xylene.

Neurological disorders and diseases due mainly to solvents were reported in 71 percent of the painters studied, 83 percent of the sandblasters and metal painters, 84 percent of the epoxy painters and in 5 percent of the tapers. Paint manufacturers who work with solvents but seldom have direct contact with them had the lowest report of neurological disorders.

Primary disorders reported most often are pre-narcotic symptoms such as dizziness, light-headedness, unusual exhilaration, loss of balance and feeling "drunk" or "high."

Many of the painters and allied tradesmen interviewed reported solvent-related industrial accidents. Usually these accidents occurred while a worker divided attention between two or more jobs, for example, balancing on a scaffold while controlling a sprayer-hose.

Though pre-narcotic symptoms most often disappeared after 10 to 40 minutes in fresh air, the full effect of solvent-intoxication many times was not felt during exposure but developed or was noticed after the worker left the painting environment.

Most workers had experienced difficulty in driving after solvent exposure. Several claimed accidents and near misses, while one painter stated that he had driven home

Suffering in the IBPAT Ranks (Part II)

pe bed
olvent ex-
accidents
ie painter
en home

In addition to accidents caused while a worker is solvent-intoxi-

(Continued next page)

In the meantime, Dr. Finklea urges workers to report any medical personnel, either physicians or nurses, who administer chelation therapy to lead-exposed workers to the ethics committees of their respective professional societies.

38 Chemical Culprits of the Paint Industry and the Trades that use Them

A—Floor tile Workers
B—Other (Glaziers, Carpenters)
C—Paint Manufacturers
D—Painters
E—Sandblasters and Metal Painters
F—Tapers
G—Titanium Dioxide Manufacturers

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Acetic Acid			X				X
Alcohol		X	X	X	X		X
Aliphatic Hydrocarbons		X	X	X	X		X
Ammonia		X	X				
Antimony		X					
Aromatic Hydrocarbons		X	X	X	X		X
Asbestos		X	X				X
Barite		X	X	X	X		X
Benzene		X	X	X	X		X
Bichromates			X	X	X		X
Boric Acid			X				X
Cadmium Compounds			X	X			X
Carbon Tetrachloride		X	X	X	X		X
Chlorinated Hydrocarbons		X	X	X	X		X
Chromium Compounds			X	X	X		X
Crystalline Silica		X	X	X	X		X
Esters		X	X	X	X		X
Glycols		X	X	X	X		X
Ketones		X	X	X	X		X
Lead Compounds			X	X	X		
Manganese Oleate			X	X	X		X
Magnesium Carbonate			X	X	X		X
Methylene Chloride			X	X	X		X
Mineral Spirits		X	X	X	X		X
Naptha		X	X	X	X		
Oxalic Acid		X	X				
Pigment Dust		X	X	X	X	X	X
Shellac			X	X			
Silica Compounds		X	X	X		X	X
Sodium Hydroxide		X	X				
Sulfuric Acid		X	X	X			X
Titanium Dioxide			X	X	X		X
Toluene		X	X	X	X		X
Turpentine		X	X	X	X		X
Vinyl Chloride			X	X	X		X
Wood Dust		X	X				
Xylene		X	X	X	X		X
Zinc Compounds		X	X	X	X		X

Brain, Nerve Disease

Other effects of prolonged exposure are nervousness, irritability, uncertainty and a change in sleep habits.

Further, at least four percent of the workers have experienced unconsciousness from high exposure to solvents.

Extremely prolonged and concentrated exposure—for example, the case of one man addicted to toluene for 14 years who breathed the vapors from a toluene-soaked rag—will cause permanent brain damage.

Ingestion will cause paralysis, blindness, brain damage, coma and death.

Though solvents are the most frequent cause of the neurological disorders and diseases among painters and allied tradesmen, they are not the only ones, nor the most insidious.

Lead compounds are responsible for severe neurological disorders and diseases in even relatively small quantities, as are antimony, sulfuric acid, manganese oleate and some zinc compounds.

Lead had long been the chronic plague of painters until, in recent years, its use has been extremely curtailed by government regulation and the increasing popularity of titanium-base paints.

If you are a titanium worker, you may rejoice that few of the neurological disorders and diseases were found among your cohorts. The reported harms to titanium workers are generally thought to result from the use of sulfuric acids and oxides in the manufacturing process and not from the titanium.

In any case, however, anyone who might be continually exposed to any of the chemical culprits discussed in this report must take into account the likelihood of experienc-

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38 Chemical Culprits of the Paint Industry and 17 Neurological Disorders and Diseases they May Cause*

Disease Causes Identified

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ing some deleterious neurological effect.

Consequently, those exposed to these solvents should take every precaution to minimize the exposure.

This is very difficult since most exposure occurs through inhalation of vapors. However, adequate ventilation, shorter durations of concentrated exposure and avoiding skin contact with or ingestion of the chemicals will all help.

Further, if you smoke, don't. More on that next month when, in Part III, we take a look at disorders and diseases of the respiratory system among painters and allied tradesmen and the chemical culprits alleged to be responsible by the MSSM sleuths.

Brother Pinned Under Ton of Glass

Brother Fred Meyn of Local Union 1555, Fairbanks, Alaska, sustained spine and head injuries when he was pinned under a ton of glass at Bucher Glass Company where he is employed.

Meyn, who joined Local 1555 as an apprentice glazier, and has been working as a journeyman for just over one year, was apparently unloading crates of glass when one fell on him.

The full extent of his injuries are not known, but he is not expected to regain use of his legs at all.

Brother Meyn is married and has one son, Sean, age six.

	Unconsciousness	Tremors of Muscles	Slowed Reactions	Paraneoplastic Symptoms (General)	Paralysis	Nausea	Mental Confusion	Loss of Visual Acuity	Loss of Coordination	Light Headedness	Insomnia	"High"ness	Headaches	Fatigue	Exhilaration	Dizziness	Central Nerv. Syst. Damage	Blindness
Acetic Acid																		
Alcohol	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Aliphatic Hydrocarbons	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ammonia																		
Antimony																		
Aromatic Hydrocarbons	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Asbestos																		
Barite																		
Benzene	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bichromates																		
Boric Acid																		
Cadmium Compounds																		
Carbon Tetrachloride	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chlorinated Hydrocarbons	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chromium Compounds																		
Crystalline Silica																		
Esters	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Glycols																		
Ketones	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lead Compounds																		
Macanese Oleate																		
Magnesium Carbonate																		
Methylene Chloride	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mineral Spirits	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Naptha	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oxalic Acid																		
Pigment Dust																		
Shellac																		
Silica Compounds																		
Sodium Hydroxide																		
Sulfuric Acid	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Titanium Dioxide																		
Toluene	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Turpentine	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vinyl Chloride																		
Wood Dust																		
Xylene	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Zinc Compounds																		

*This summary of the MSSM findings makes no distinction between the harms of long- and short-term exposure nor high and low concentrations of exposure. However, painters and allied tradesmen are exposed to these chemicals for longer periods of time and in higher concentrations during the course of their work than would be an "average" citizen. Consequently, the chart does indicate harms painters and allied tradesmen are more likely to suffer as a direct result of their occupation.