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**BCTD,
AFL-CIO
Meet:
The Goal is
Jobs**



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Painters & Allied Trades Journal

On the Cover

The AFL-CIO and its Building Trades Department meet. The goal: jobs for the unemployed.

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BRUSH MAKERS AND TO THE TRADE
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The Decade of Job Safety

Asbestos Workers Bring Disease Home From Job

The first phase of our Brotherhood's Job Safety Program was to get the facts—a research project contracted to the Mt. Sinai School of Environmental Medicine by an arm of the federal government, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

This article is about the kind of dangers Mt. Sinai technicians have spotted for one of our brother crafts—asbestos workers.

IBPAT members, chiefly drywall finishers, often are exposed to asbestos-based compounds. Mt. Sinai, under Dr. Irving Selikoff, has been studying the effects of asbestos on Brotherhood members.

The Journal will periodically report on job safety findings of particular interest to our Brotherhood. This is such an article.

A study of 326 family contacts of former asbestos factory workers by the Mount Sinai School of Medicine found that 35 percent had X-ray abnormalities characteristic of asbestos exposure.

The data were presented recently to a New York safety conference by Dr. Henry Anderson.

The family members potentially affected included all in the

household; it was not simply the wife of the worker, who would shake dust from her husband's clothes before washing them. Children, brothers and sisters were affected as well as wives. The dust apparently had been present throughout the household, brought home on the clothes of the factory workers.

The workers were employed at a factory that manufactured amosite insulation material, often for use in Naval ships, but also widely used in power plants and industrial insulation. It operated from 1941 through 1954. Many of the workers whose families later developed signs of asbestos exposure were employed for relatively short periods of time.

Family members, however, may have been exposed longer. Asbestos, once in the house, is difficult to remove and exposures could continue long after the end of the husband's or father's employment. In other studies by Mount Sinai research workers, asbestos dust was still present in households of these former factory workers 20 years after closure of the plant.

Mesothelioma, a cancer often linked to asbestos exposure, has also been found among these family members. Of 252 deaths so far identified among household contacts of these former workers, two have been from pleural mesothelioma. Additionally, two other meso-

thelioma cases have been identified in living members of this group.

One case was the 42-year-old daughter of a man who had worked in the plant for five years. The family lived near the plant and the daughter used to bring her father's lunch to the plant every day, when she was 10 years old.

As early as 1960, scientists reported cases of mesothelioma in individuals who had had no prior occupational exposure to asbestos.

The results of this study dramatize the need for stringent dust control and cleanup in situations where asbestos is used. It also heightens the importance of individual worker hygiene and demonstrates the need for adequate changing facilities and showers.

Under no circumstances should dusty clothes be brought into the home, even to be put into the washing machine. They should be washed separately, preferably by a commercial industrial laundry service equipped to handle asbestos contaminated work clothes.

For family contacts who suspect they have been exposed to considerable household contamination, medical surveillance is in order. The family physician should be told the exposure history so that X-ray and chest examinations and subsequent medical problems can be closely monitored for possible symptoms of past asbestos exposure at home.

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