FILE NAME: Flooring Defense Exhibits (FLDX)

DATE: 1979 Aug

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Memo - Dept of the Navy RE Use of Asbestos-Containing Materials

EXHIBIT_8476

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20372

IN REPLY REFER TO
BUMED-31422-AAS:lh
6260.4
AUG 10 1979

From: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
To: Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22332

Subj: Use of Asbestos-containing Materials

Ref: (a) COMNAVFACENGCOM ltr 0461E/PRB 5100, of 29 May 1979

1. Reference (a) requested a Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) position on using construction materials which contain bonded or encapsulated asbestos fibers. BUMED continues to maintain that highly hazardous materials should be substituted with less hazardous materials where feasible and where acceptable substitutes are readily available.

2. BUMED considers asbestos or asbestos-containing materials in themselves are not hazardous except under conditions during which numerous individual fibers are released into the environment as a result of cutting, grinding, or abraiding. Such conditions occur during "ripout" of asbestos thermal insulation and processing friable asbestos products. These products contain loosely-bound asbestos and crumble easily. Use of friable asbestos products is inappropriate and should be prohibited except in situations where no acceptable substitutes exist.

3. The majority of building materials contain asbestos which is locked-in firmly in a cement binder. Under normal circumstances, these materials are not hazardous unless the material is subjected to unusually severe conditions (abrasive sawing, pulverizing, etc.), or if they are used in a manner which is contrary to recommended work practices. To minimize potential risks, such construction materials (including cement pipe, shingles, wallboard, etc.) should be substituted with asbestos-free materials where suitable substitutes exist. Consideration should be given to factors including but not limited to durability, maintenance requirements, fire/heat resistance, and cost, to determine acceptability.

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4. Materials which contain asbestos encapsulated in a pliable or malleable organic binder (vinyl-asbestos floor tile or asphalt-asbestos roof tile) are not likely to release asbestos fibers even under the most severe conditions and consequently need not be substituted except where specifically directed. Materials that could conceivably be broken down to release fibers should be appropriately labelled.

/s/

W. P. ARENTZEN

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