

RVC Said Handling Asbestos Properly

ALBANY — As Rondout Valley High School doors closed today to allow workers to spray ceiling asbestos tiles with fixative, an official of the New York State Department of Health maintained that air contamination from the tiles is not a hazardous public health problem.

"There is no evidence that it poses an acute problem, and I think it is being handled in appropriate fashion," said Dr. Nicholas Vianna of the department's Bureau of Food and Institutional Sanitation.

Rondout Valley High School will remain closed Friday to allow a New Jersey firm, KRC Associates, to spray about 33,000 square feet of ceilings with a clear polymer coating they developed especially for the purpose. The spray reacts chemically with asbestos molecules to form a tough surface coating that prevents flaking when the material begins to disintegrate.

Rondout Superintendent Dr. James O'Connell had ceiling materials tested after hearing a televised report of a school closing in New Jersey for asbestos particle contamination.

Tests showed a concentration of .15 to .17 asbestos fibers per milliliter of air at the high school. O'Connell said that the Environmental Protection Agency suggested minimum is no more than .1 fibers per milliliter, while the Bureau of Labor recommends not more than .5 per milliliter.

New York State has no minimum standard for contamination by asbestos particles, Dr. Vianna said. "Our only experience has been with people such as asbestos miners, industrial workers, and pipefitters, workers who inhale large amounts of asbestos," he said. "Regarding minimal amounts in the air, it remains to be seen."

Repeated exposure in large amounts over long periods of time can cause chronic diseases, including cancer, he said. Asked for his definition of a long time, he replied: "Something like 15 or 20 years."

The Ulster County Department of Health does not have any minimum air contamination standards for asbestos. A spokesman referred inquiries to state officials.

A survey of Ulster County school administrators disclosed that all were aware of the problem and that all had checked up on their own districts after Dr. James O'Connell, the Rondout Valley superintendent of schools, disclosed his district's plans at a superintendent's conference last week.

Robert McCarthy, the New Paltz superintendent, said that about 14,000 square feet of ceiling tiles in the middle school contained asbestos. He has hired Rosenagel and Associates of Cherry Hill, N.J., to conduct tests which were scheduled to begin today. Results of air contamination measurements will be available early next week and appropriate action will be taken

if indicated, McCarthy said.

Louis A. Seimann, Kingston superintendent, said district buildings had been checked after hearing televised reports of a school closing in New Jersey. Only two boiler room ceilings in the entire district contain asbestos, he said.

Saugerties Superintendent Daniel Lee said that David Hildebrand, superintendent of buildings and grounds, had been made aware of the problem about three years ago and had checked out all district buildings. All tests were negative and there are no asbestos materials in any of the buildings, Lee said.

Dr. Jack Keough, Ontario business manager, said the district had also hired Rosenagel and Associates to do a series of tests. The final test, to determine if deterioration and flaking of the asbestos has occurred, is set for next Wednesday.

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Contamination Closes Rondout High School

KYSERIKE— Rondout Valley High School will be closed Thursday and Friday while repairs are made to eliminate air contamination by asbestos particles in the ceiling materials.

The work will be performed by the KRC Research Corporation of Morristown, New Jersey, who will spray the ceilings with an epoxy polymer coating developed especially for the purpose.

Rondout Valley School Superintendent Dr. James O'Connell said he ordered all district buildings inspected after hearing of a New Jersey school that had to be closed because of high asbestos fiber content in the air.

Spraying of approximately 50,000 square feet will cost an estimated \$33,000, with up to 80 per cent of the cost being refundable by the State Education Department, according to O'Connell. The school board, advised by the superintendent that asbestos fiber concentration was higher than some recommended minimums,

declared an emergency.

Further tests showed a concentration of .15 to .17 asbestos fibers per milliliter of air at the high school.

O'Connell said that the Environmental Protection Agency suggests no greater than .1 fibers per milliliter of air, while the Bureau of Labor recommends not more than .5 fibers per milliliter.

"We thought anything that exceeded the most cautious recommendation should be corrected immediately," O'Connell said.

O'Connell said that the material used in the high school ceilings was commonly used during the time when the Rondout Valley High School was built. The school opened in 1960. The material was inexpensive and has excellent heat and acoustical properties.

O'Connell said that the two days used to repair the ceilings will be made up with snow days. The district has used two of its six scheduled snow days so far.

Rondout high school closed for repairs

RONDOUT VALLEY — Rondout Valley Central High School will be closed today, as workmen repair ceilings in the building.

The ceilings contain a coated finish of ground asbestos-washed glue, which poses a potential health hazard.

Building Superintendent Donald McClain and School Superintendent Dr. James J. O'Connell inspected all district buildings, but only the high school was found to have this potential problem.

While the school is closed, the staff is working at the Middle School. The High School will reopen Monday.

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