

October 1, 1949

Mr. George Calingaert
Ethyl Corporation
Research Laboratories
1600 W. Eight Mile Road
Ferndale 20
Detroit, Michigan

Subject: Exhaust Gas Hazards

Dear Cal:

The matter of the new underhood ventilation of several of the new cars has already come to my attention, and I am aware of the problem that presents itself in heavy traffic. I am not certain that this was a smart move on the part of manufacturers, for in accomplishing one purpose, it has magnified a danger that is significant. Obviously, these ventilating systems should be closed off when dangerous conditions exist, but I have no confidence in the avoidance of the hazard by this means.

As to the danger of lead poisoning under these conditions, you can, I believe, dismiss the idea entirely. In the first place, the exposure is likely to be brief, and it will always be intermittent. Our information on garage mechanics, who are often exposed to worse conditions over long periods of time, is quite conclusive in its evidence as to the hygienically insignificant character of this type of exposure.

Despite the remarks above, I am sure you will be interested in knowing that we are at last in a position to initiate the further study of this problem under controlled laboratory conditions of human exposure. It will be quite some time before we have any information, but this question was bound to come up repeatedly, and, in my opinion, it is necessary to have an unequivocal answer to it.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

RAY:hp
cc: Mr. J.B. Macauley