

Monsanto Takes Precautions For Sauget Plant Employees

Monsanto Co. has taken precautions to protect a dozen workers in a chemical manufacturing unit at its W.G. Krummrich Plant in Sauget, following a report from federal inspectors that a contaminant harmful to the skin was found at the unit.

The unit makes chlorophenol, an intermediate chemical used by manufacturers of such products as dyes, agricultural chemicals and wood preservatives. Inspectors from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration said they detected the highly toxic substance dioxin on the ground outside the manufacturing unit in a sample taken last February.

OSHA also reported finding dioxin in surface samples inside a chlorophenol unit that had been closed for 1½ years.

"Neither of the OSHA samples are indicative of current worker exposure," Monsanto said. A spokesman added: "We don't feel there are any health hazards posed to the people" involved in manufacture of chlorophenol, which is a corrosive liquid. He said the

dioxin contaminant would produce a certain type of skin acne to those exposed and there have been no reports of this.

Still, the company decided to follow OSHA suggestions for precautions for workers. These include limiting access to the unit, having workers change their clothing and shower after working in the unit, and not allowing the workers to drink or eat at the location.

Monsanto said its own tests recently did not indicate the presence of dioxin. OSHA, in an oral report to the company, said 300 parts per billion of dioxin were found in a product sample taken last February outside the manufacturing unit and that more than 50 percent of the dioxin detected was classified as 2,3,7,8 tetrachlorodibenzo-para-dioxin, a highly toxic chemical substance.

Monsanto said the contaminant detected outside the manufacturing unit was in an area where tank cars are loaded and might have been the result of a small spill.

Chemical Spill Worker Has Complaints

HALLSVILLE, Mo. (AP) — A worker hired to help clean up the chemical spill of a train derailment near Sturgeon, Mo., says he wants straight answers about a toxic substance found in his body.

"I'm sitting at home right now, I can't even work," Walter Kidwell, 21, told an interviewer Friday. "Something's wrong with the nerves in my back, and I can't work for the mental

strain of not knowing. I want some facts."

Kidwell and another workman, who has not been identified, were employed by the Western Environmental Services of Portland, Ore., for the cleanup.

A Norfolk & Western freight train derailed Jan. 10, spilling 20,000 gallons of the toxic chemical orthochlorophenol. Monsanto Chemical Co., the manufacturer, later

said the tank car also contained traces of dioxin, a highly toxic chemical.

About 1,000 residents of the area near Sturgeon left their homes for a few days because of the chemical fumes.

Kidwell said he is dissatisfied with the answers he has been getting from the Environmental Protection Agency.

"They tell me not to worry about nothing.

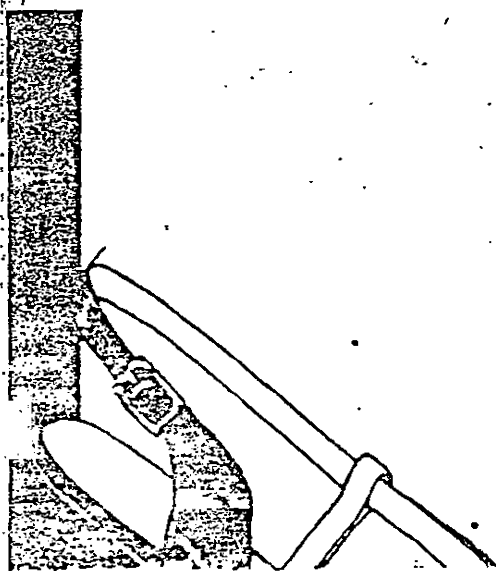
They can't guarantee me 30 days to live. I'd like to have another kid, and I don't know if I can have any more right now with all this dioxin in my blood. I just can't handle it anymore."

Dr. Joseph Seifter, senior medical adviser of the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, noted that liver and blood tests on Kidwell and the other cleanup worker have been concluded and said:

"In my opinion, nobody has been exposed to a significant degree to orthochlorophenol, phenol and to dioxin." Phenol is a chemical ingredient found with orthochlorophenol.

Kidwell said, "I'll go to Washington if I have to, to get the answers I need. I'm just tired of it. I'm going to raise some hell with these people now."

One rural Sturgeon family living near the site of the spill has filed a \$7.65 million lawsuit; other litigation is threatened.



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