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ARBETARSKYDDSSTYRELSEN
NATIONAL BOARD OF OCCUPATIONAL
SAFETY AND HEALTH

Chemistry division

Dealer
Avdelningsdirektör
Bertil Remaeus/YE

Date
1984-07-

Our sign
511 Asbest T 1660/84

Your letter
1984-06-26

Your sign

Barry Castleman
1722 Linden Ave.
Baltimore md 21217
USA

Dear Mr Castleman

In Your letter to the Swedish Metal Workers Union, which has been sent to the Board for answering, You ask for some information about the Swedish consumption of asbestos and the use of asbestos-free brakes for cars and trucks.

The Swedish import of raw asbestos has decreased from about 20.000 tonnes 1964, and about 18.000 tonnes 1974, to about 1.000 tonnes 1983 (Figure 1). The same reduction has taken place for products containing asbestos. Today it´s mostly gasket material used at high temperatures (> 250^{o}C) and high pressures which is imported.

About 30 % of the cars sold in Sweden today are equipped with asbestos-free (AF) brakes. One Swedish manufacturer, (SAAB), is using only AF. The other, (VOLVO), is partly using AF-brakes. In a month they will use AF brakes in all cars sold in Norden (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway).

Some imported cars (Volkswagen, Ford, GM) have AF-brakes today. From september 1984 about 2/3 of all new cars sold in Sweden will be equipped with AF-brakes. This concerns cars manufactured in Sweden and abroad. I think the manufacturers will put AF-brakes in the rest of the models pretty soon.

When it comes to trucks and buses, the situation is more complex. The two manufacturers in Sweden (SCANIA and VOLVO) are testing AF-materials in a number of trucks and buses. They think they need another year or so before they are ready to use AF-brakes in new buses and trucks. Some buscompanies have decided to use AF-brakes when they replace friction-elements.

The replacement of asbestos in brakes has gone faster than the Board and the industry thougt a year ago.

We have not heard of any negative results so far. AF-material in the brakes has been used in advertising as a salesargument.

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The Swedish Ordinance concerning asbestos does not differ between cars manufactured in Sweden and imported cars. The Board does not regulate the import of cars, just the working environment. When the frictionelement has to be replaced, the ordinance of asbestos require use of AF-material if such are available and can be used without decreasing the technical prestanda of the car.

The Swedish Parliament has recently asked the Government for an investigation if it is possible to ban import of cars equipped with friction elements containing asbestos. The Board has to answer the Government in a couple of months.

I hope this will give You the answer You need.

Yours faithfully

Bertil Remaeus
Head of section
Chemistry Division