

SPRAYED MINERAL FIBER MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

[Form Letter Reply to Notice of Walk-Out on the Claim that Sprayed Fiber is a Health Hazard]

Dear :

This is in reply to your advice that workers in other trades present on the job in progress at the , claim that a possible health hazard may result from exposure to sprayed mineral fiber dust.

We are, of course, familiar with the publicity appearing recently in certain media concerning the possible effects of long exposure to high concentrations of asbestos dust. While a number of medical investigations of this question have been conducted over a period of years, the conclusions drawn from the medical evidence adduced to date vary considerably. At this juncture, it is fair to say that medical authorities are not in agreement, even as to the effects of long term exposure to high concentrations of such dust, for example where ventilation is lacking. Definitive data is lacking on the effects of occassional exposure to present-day sprayed asbestos fiber dust. Thus the more exhaustive studies and those of longest duration do not relate specifically to the type of sprayed mineral fiber products now being produced by members of the Association, and accordingly not to the type of product being used on this job.

Moreover, the studies which have been cited in the adverse publicity are based essentially on medical records of workers who performed their jobs under conditions substantially different from the average conditions now maintained at job sites. Association products are specially treated during processing with dust control agents. Dust concentration is further minimized by the introduction of atomized water sprays as the fiber leaves the hose. The likelihood of any serious concentration of dust particles would be only in the immediate vicinity of the spray gun. For that reason, we caution applicators to wear suitable dust masks, since they may be working under these conditions over extended periods of time.

Our Association members seriously doubt that any significant hazard exists for other workmen on the same job site not actually spraying fiber. There is no medical evidence to our knowledge indicating that anyone spraying, using Association product or exposed to dust in areas adjacent to the spraying have ever been afflicted with respiratory or other ailments caused by Association fibers or processes.

The sprayed fiber industry, together with other industries dealing in asbestos products, are cooperating with and supporting responsible research projects now under way in the laboratories of the environmental health division of the Public Health Service and

such reputable research organizations as the Industrial Hygiene Foundation of America in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Since these research efforts have not been concluded, any statement indicating conclusive knowledge of the health aspects of today's sprayed fiber products, applied under today's conditions, would be premature and seriously misleading.

The Association is taking every effort to assure that workmen applying the products of the Association are adequately protected with respiratory masks. If a particular workman operating in areas adjacent to the spraying of mineral fibers is unduly sensitive to dust, he should also wear a protective mask. Such allergic tendencies would be exhibited in the presence of most any dust, for example, resulting from fiber spraying, concrete hammering, plaster mixing, floor sweeping, and the like. There is to our knowledge, however, no medical research that has established the occasional exposure to some fiber spray dust as either more or less serious health hazard than other types of dust commonly associated with construction site operations.

We believe this answers the questions raised. The Association would be pleased to furnish such other information as may be requested.

Sincerely yours,

SPRAYED MINERAL FIBER
MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

By/_____