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EMPLOYMENT SAFETY AND HEALTH GUIDE

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This issue is in two parts. This is Part I

OSHA to Lower Asbestos Exposure Limit

Based on an April NIOSH/OSHA work group recommendation that the present eight-hour TWA asbestos limit be lowered from 2.0 to 0.1 fibers longer than 5 micrometers per cubic centimeter of air, OSHA will begin working on a revision to § 1910.1001 and hopes to develop a new requirement within six months, Director Eula Bingham announced April 18. Bingham said OSHA will develop the proposal under its cancer policy but it has not yet decided what the permissible level will be or whether an emergency temporary or permanent standard will be proposed.

NIOSH director Anthony Robbins said at the joint OSHA-NIOSH news briefing that the work group report, *Workplace Exposure to Asbestos: Review and Recommendations*, shows there is no known level at which asbestos-related diseases do not occur, and that all commercial and several noncommercial forms of asbestos cause disease. NIOSH recommends that all workplace exposure from new nonessential uses of asbestos be eliminated. Asbestos, to which 1.4 million workers are exposed, causes the serious form of lung fibrosis known as asbestosis, as well as cancer of the lung, chest and abdominal cavity membrane, larynx, stomach and intestines.

Between eight and eleven million workers have been exposed to asbestos since World War II, Robbins said, and tens of thousands of cancer deaths are attributable to asbestos. Even if all new uses of asbestos were now eliminated, there will continue to be exposure for years to come among maintenance and demolition workers, Robbins said. The report recommends more stringent medical testing, monitoring, and rate retention provisions.

OSHA Reopens Noise Standard Rule-Making Record

OSHA has reopened the noise standard rule-making record closed in 1977 to include articles and documents on noise issued since then, according to an April 18 *Federal Register* notice. The Agency is seeking comments on the new documents, which pertain to noise monitoring, hearing protection,

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Marc — What progress are we making on non-asbestos lining?
Bob Stokes

St. Louis Bankers et al. v. Occupational Safety & Health Admin. et al., 06/10/2010

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