



E. I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS & COMPANY
INCORPORATED

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FROM: G. IRVIN LIPP *GIL* | *kms*

Attached, for your information, is the final approved standby statement and questions and answers on benzene. Please feel free to use if you receive local inquiries.

For additional information please contact P. H. Wyche at 774-1942 in Wilmington.

GIL:kms

Attachment

STANDBY STATEMENT ON BENZENE

Du Pont's policy and practices for handling hazardous chemicals, including benzene, are set with the objective of minimizing employee exposure, even at safe levels. For benzene, we have exposure limits that are significantly below the current OSHA standard of 10 ppm time-weighted-average.

The hazards of benzene at high concentration levels have long been recognized. It is a highly flammable liquid that can produce toxic effects. When inhaled in sufficient quantities over an extended period of time, it can produce chronic effects. Du Pont has conscientiously followed its safety policies in regard to benzene. We have instructed employees in its proper handling to avoid toxic effects and have informed them it is a suspected carcinogen.

While benzene is a suspected carcinogen, the company has conducted an epidemiological study which gave no indication that any chronic toxic effects, including leukemia, have resulted from employee exposure to benzene. This finding is based on some 50 years' experience in using the chemical. Another study should be completed by year-end 1983. In addition, no other valid medical studies have documented any chronic effects from the exposure limits Du Pont has maintained for more than 20 years.

UFA 000010996

(TO BE USED ONLY IF ASKED: Du Pont purchases benzene for use at plants and laboratories, including Deepwater and Gibbstown in New Jersey; and Beaumont and Corpus Christi in Texas. Most if it is used to make intermediate chemicals for the production of plastics, elastomers and textile fibers. Trace amounts of benzene are found in solvents and chemicals used by some other sites.)

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8/1/83

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON BENZENE

- Q1. How do you explain letters from Du Pont files which seem to indicate Du Pont knew of special hazards presented by benzene as early as the 1930's from its own Haskell Laboratory studies or from other sources, and was considering different control and testing measures?
- A1. The letters are evidence of our efforts to learn the hazards and keep abreast of the latest medical and scientific information on benzene. Du Pont has always based its safeguards, exposure limits and communications on current knowledge of the hazards of benzene. As information on the hazards of benzene has become known, our employees have been informed, either directly or by having the data made available to them.
- Q2. How many employees are exposed to benzene?
- A2. In Du Pont alone, about 300 people have a potential to be exposed, including those at sites where there are very low levels of benzene.
- Q3. What procedures does Du Pont use to protect employees?
- A3. We have taken steps to limit employee exposure to below 10 ppm (TWA-8). We are continuing to monitor benzene concentrations closely at all sites, to maintain strict operating procedures, to provide proper safety equipment, and to provide for medical surveillance of employees.

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Q4. If Du Pont was able to meet the original OSHA emergency standard of 1 ppm for benzene, why did we fight the standard in court?

A4. At the time the standard was issued, we were achieving a 10 ppm level. We believed there was no indication in any laboratory or epidemiological studies that showed any health effect even at a 25 ppm level. Thus, there was no adequate reason to undertake the extreme measures that were necessary to reach 1 ppm. Du Pont did reach that level, but to do so frequently required that employees wear respirators for long periods of time, which is better avoided if possible. Employees were informed we felt the 1 ppm standard was unnecessarily low, and when it was overturned, we resumed practices to maintain a level of 10 ppm or lower. However, employees may still wear respirators if they choose.

Q5. Du Pont did not give blood tests for employees working with benzene until blood tests became a routine part of all employee physical exams in 1974, despite a recommendation from Du Pont's own Haskell Laboratory. Now, OSHA requires a blood test. Does Du Pont give blood tests to employees exposed to benzene?

A5. Yes, we conform to the OSHA standard. However, we do not believe there is a special need for this type of

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monitoring because the potential exposure level at our facilities does not pose a hazard. Special blood tests were instituted before 1974 at many of our sites where benzene was used.

Q6. Are procedures for using benzene as a solvent more relaxed in laboratories than at plants?

A6. The same exposure limits and handling procedures apply at laboratories and manufacturing sites and are adhered to with the same diligence at all sites.

Q7. Does Conoco make or use benzene?

A7. Benzene is produced by Conoco at its plant in Chocolate Bayou, Tex., and is used by Conoco in the production of detergents at Lake Charles, La., and Baltimore, Md.

Q8. Benzene was used in great quantities by Du Pont at Victoria, Tex., for some 25 years. Has there been a higher incidence of cancer or other chronic effects among Victoria employees?

A8. Du Pont has detected no excess incidence of leukemia or any other chronic effects that can be related to benzene or any other chemicals among Victoria employees. Epidemiology studies have shown a slight excess incidence of brain tumors. This excess is not statistically significant when compared to Du Pont, national or regional incidence rates.

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Q9. Du Pont is being sued by two men (William Kee and Edmund Niedzielski) who claim they contracted leukemia from exposure to benzene and that Du Pont deliberately exposed them to the chemical with the intent to injure them. What is Du Pont's position?

A9. We naturally cannot comment on the specifics of court cases. Our position in general is that their allegations that Du Pont acted in "wanton and willful disregard" of their safety and intentionally injured them are simply not true. We believe employees in laboratories where the plaintiffs worked were and are fully informed of the hazards of benzene and precautions taken were adequate to protect them from health effects.