

ASBESTOS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



NOTES FOR ASSOCIATIONS

31 AUGUST 1982
AIA/41/NEWS

Asbestos International Association
68 Gloucester Place,
London W1H 3HL, England.
Telephone: 01-486 3528
Telex: 298618 INTA G

CAPCO JEN 0012125

PLAINTIFFS EXHIBIT
CAP-779

31 AUGUST 1982

AIA NOTES FOR ASSOCIATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. The six months since the last "AIA Notes for Associations" were distributed have been dominated by the World Symposium on Asbestos (WSA) held from 24th to 28th May 1982.
2. First of all there were the preparations which took up a considerable amount of working time and effort; then there was the conference itself and finally the aftermath.
3. At paragraphs 29-33 we take a closer look at the WSA but it is enough to say here that the worst apprehensions of industry were not realised; we must now exploit the positive points which arose.

THE PANELS

4. Efforts by Panels on behalf of industry cannot be measured solely by the frequency with which a Panel meets but this does give some indication of interest and using this criterion we find that our ten Panels have met on average twice a year. The Governing Council meets twice a year, the Executive Committee four times and our most active Panel the E.A.C. Advisory Council averages six meetings a year.

AIA's EEC Advisory Council (EAC)

5. The two important Directives on asbestos which are still being processed through the EEC are:-
 - a) The Directive Limiting the Marketing and Use of Asbestos and Asbestos Products. (Known to us as "the DG III Directive" as it is the responsibility of Directorate General III in the EEC Commission).
 - b) The Directive on the Protection of Workers from Harmful Exposure to Asbestos. ("the DG V Directive").
6. One of the critical stages in the process was it's consideration by the European Parliament - This gave a very positive result. Parliament's recommendations were that:-

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CONTENTS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PARAGRAPH NO.</u>
INTRODUCTION	1 - 3
THE AIA PANELS	4 - 26
CONFERENCES	27 - 35
AIA PUBLICATIONS	36
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS	37 - 47
MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS	47 - 81
ASBESTOS FLOOR TILES	82 - 84

Note:- References to AIA Information Circulars (AIC's) are shown by the AIC Issue Number followed by the Serial number within that issue.

e.g. AIC No. 20/4

AIA/41/NEWS 31 AUGUST 1982

- a) There should be no complete ban on crocidolite; certain uses should be allowed.
 - b) There should be no phasing-out of asbestos or asbestos-containing products either in 1985 or after 10 years.
 - c) A catalogue of substitutes should not be established nor should use of substitutes be made compulsory.
 - d) There should be no banning of the use of non-crocidolite asbestos fibres except for some uses (e.g. spraying and insulation) where the harmful release of fibres could not be prevented.
 - e) The use of asbestos in the manufacture of toys and products used solely for decoration should be prohibited.
7. In spite of this encouraging attitude to asbestos on the part of the Members of Parliament we understand that their recommendations to the two national working groups of the Council who are now dealing with the final stages of these two Directives may not be greatly heeded. If true this is most unfortunate; there is no question but that if the recommendations had been negative they would have been widely and loudly quoted in the Working Party deliberations! We are doing what we can to redress matters. Reference to the full text of the debate is made in AIC No. 31/3.
8. The "DG III Directive" may have to be split into three separate Directives, of which agreement on the first two is very near. The three Directives could be as follows:-
- a) Directive One - Bans to be imposed on:-
 - i) Crocidolite - with 3 exceptions (to which all countries agree) - The exceptions are:-
 - A/C Pipes
 - Acid resisting seals and gaskets
 - Special Moulding Powders
 - ii) The use of all other asbestos types for spraying thermal and acoustic insulation and toys.

- b) Directive Two - Labelling:-
 - i) Fibres - A carcinogen label - yet to be designed.
 - ii) Products - For those products likely to be processed further - the "a" logo to be used plus selected wording.
 - iii) Crocidolite - "contains Crocidolite" to be mentioned where applicable.
- c) Directive Three - Certain prohibited uses of non-crocidolite fibre

Agreement on this is giving the greatest difficulty. We are suggesting that a clause should be included limiting the prohibition of these uses to where "the harmful release of fibres cannot be prevented". This requires a definition of "harmful release".

9. The "DG V Directive" has been largely agreed but the most difficult point to resolve remains "the field of application" (Article 3) in which the Directive is to apply. The problem is to find a wording which makes the Directive apply to:
- a) Workers permanently exposed (e.g. in mining, manufacturing).
 - b) Workers occasionally exposed to high levels (e.g. in demolition, maintenance of machinery in manufacturing plants etc).
 - but NOT to:
 - c) Workers occasionally exposed to low levels (e.g. on building sites using recommended tools for asbestos cement, garage mechanics etc).
 - d) Persons permanently exposed to very low levels (e.g. office personnel in a manufacturing plant, storekeepers in a building materials shop, traffic policemen etc).
10. A new idea which would allow exceptions in cases (c) and (d) above from the application of the Directive is to fix a maximum "cumulative exposure level" (in fibre years/m³) below which the Directive would not apply.
11. The Directorate General XI which looks after the Environment and the Consumer has recently been considering Environmental Protection from dust emissions from factories. The AIA Dust Measurement Advisory Panel has produced a discussion document on plant emissions into the atmosphere and methods of measuring them.

12. The discussion continues in the Commission of the EEC on whether it would serve a useful purpose to have a system of grading asbestos-containing articles according to the degree of "fixity" of the fibre in the product. The problem is to devise a suitable test and so far none has been found, although T.N.O. (The Organisation for Scientific Research) in Holland is investigating the matter. A world-wide survey of AIA Members, however, has shown that there is not much interest in the project in industry.

The Scientific Advisory Panel (ScAP)

13. The Scientific Advisory Panel met in Montreal and expressed disappointment that their suggestion for a world-wide prevalence study had not been accepted by the AIA on the grounds of cost (half a million pounds sterling). The study would have used radiographic data from work forces to demonstrate an improving asbestosis situation in the decade 1970 to 1980. The ScAP noted that AIA Member Associations world-wide had spent over £18 million during the previous five years on asbestos and health studies and they felt that the sum proposed for the prevalence study was not large by comparison. (Note:- This argument is a little unfair to the Asbestos Industry!)
14. Suggestions are voiced from time to time that industry-sponsored research into asbestos and health may be duplicating effort or directing it to wrong aims. To help avoid this the AIA publishes a list of such industry research and the latest was circulated on 26 July 1982 (see AIC No. 31/4).
15. It has been suggested that the Scientific Advisory Panel might comment on the effectiveness of our choice of research. This idea is being investigated. However, industry should be able to ensure that there is no duplication of effort. Member Associations are therefore asked to cross-check the list with their own and others' projects (this concerns particularly AFA, AIC, CNA, IOEH Assoc., SAAPAC, WVAZ).
16. Members have been circulated (AIC No. 27/3) with the work of Dr Sandro Amaducci who under the sponsorship of the EEC has published two Directives concerning asbestos research, with a third to follow.

The Dust Measurement Advisory Panel (DMAP)

17. The Fourth AIA Dust Colloquium will take place in Edinburgh, Scotland from 21st to 23rd September 1982, with about 70 participants from 18 countries. The programme for the Colloquium will include discussion both on Occupational and Non-occupational Measurements and the drafting of an AIA Reference Method for the Determination of Airborne Asbestos Fibre Concentrations in Non-occupational Areas.

18. Because of increasing concern with the question of asbestos in the ambient air it is important that a Reference Method is developed for measuring asbestos air concentrations away from factory sites. Because of the large work programme called for, this is not proving easy to achieve but we should be prepared to answer our critics by explaining the difficulties in simple terms.

19. We therefore look to the DMAP for:-

- a) guidance on the wording of a statement on the provisional (current) position on Ambient Air measurement
- b) in due course the production of a Reference Method for Ambient Air Measurement (RTM2).

20. The AIA Publication on the measurement of Dust in the Workplace (RTM1) is being incorporated into the International Standardisation Organisation (ISO)/TC Method. However the ISO/TC Method is likely to include two sets of counting rules (embodying fibre aspect ratios of 3 : 1 and 5 : 1).

The Medical Advisory Panel (MAP)

21. The MAP Document on the Criteria for Diagnosing Asbestos-related Diseases (AIA Information Memorandum 2/81) has now been published in the International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health (1982) 49: 357-361.
22. The protocol for the Training of Industry Doctors has not been completed and circulated to Member Associations (AIA Information Memorandum 1/82). The section of the protocol which deals with an Audio Visual Presentation will, when completed, be on general sale world-wide. The protocol itself will be continuously up-dated as required.
23. Work on the MAP Standard Set of Radiograph Films is proceeding. These films will set standards from which it will be possible for much more accurate and objective assessments of lung changes to be made. We have informed the International Labour Organisation (ILO) about the project and will be having further discussions with them.

The Communications Advisory Panel (CAP)

24. The CAP has been very active in supporting the Secretariat of the World Symposium on Asbestos in mounting the World Symposium. It has also played a considerable part during the Symposium through individual CAP Members. The CAP is now preparing a report on the WSA for submission to the AIA and thence to the asbestos industry.

The Building and Construction Advisory Panel (BCAP)

25. The BCAP is preparing a booklet explaining the facts about asbestos cement. This booklet will be applicable world-wide and Member Associations will be able to extract relevant data for incorporation in national booklets, pamphlets, etc.

The Fibre Producers Advisory Panel (FPAP)

26. The FPAP has been anxious to help the industry by promoting the advantages of asbestos usage. The formation of the Canadian Asbestos Information Centre (CAIC) (see paragraphs 53-57 below) should do much to further this aim.

CONFERENCES

The Biological Effects of Man-Made Mineral Fibres

27. The Conference on the Biological Effects of Man-Made Mineral Fibres (MMMF) held at Copenhagen on 20-22 April 1982 has been amply reviewed (seven separate reports are listed in recent AIA Information Circulars). The term MMMF covers (a) Ceramic fibres (b) Mineral fibres (c) Glass fibres (d) Glass filament (in descending order of danger) and in various papers presented at the Conference differences were observed between these four but even the most dangerous were relatively safe at the concentrations at which they had been experienced in various factories throughout Europe and in the USA.
28. Nevertheless, more study was needed before a final assessment of MMMF and health could be made. The effects of smoking, and of the binders used with the fibre, needed to be evaluated; and programmes for research into industrial hygiene and epidemiology needed to be established.

The World Symposium on Asbestos

29. 660 delegates from 48 countries together with 160 journalists from 15 countries were present at the World Symposium on Asbestos held in Montreal from 24-27 May 1982. The aim was to provide a neutral forum for discussion for those groups interested in the problem of asbestos and health. It was not expected that positive answers could be given and indeed at the end of the Conference most of the problems remained unanswered.

30. However delegates were able to appreciate the complications involved in trying to seek solutions and, if nothing else, they left with more open minds. To quote the Editor of the British Medical Journal (BMJ), Volume 284, 1-12 June 1982:

"Some messages however came out of the meeting. Firstly the general view was that with current standards rigorously enforced, there should be virtually no ill-health effects and that the need was for proper enforcement wherever asbestos was used secondly the importance of keeping past workers under surveillance thirdly some countries had much lower standards than those in the West"

31. The industry would have liked to see definite answers to the following two important questions:-

A Is there a threshold level below which asbestos has no adverse effects?
i.e. what do we know about the dose/response ratio at low levels.

B Are there any environmental effects of asbestos usage?

32. Some of the papers did give some useful background to these questions particularly Higginson & Schmöhl to Question A and Enterline, Felbermeyer, Langer & Siemiatycki to Question B.

33. Although the industry had feared that there might be a negative outcome to the WSA, it was clear that neither the scientists nor the majority of regulatory agencies favoured a complete ban and even those unions who were against asbestos in their prepared speeches seemed during the course of the debate to accept its use for the foreseeable future. To quote the conclusion of the BMJ editorial referred to above "Not one of a panel of speakers including an anti-asbestos trade unionist foresaw a replacement (for asbestos) in the next 10 years".

AIA Biennial Conference - Paris 3-5 May 1983

34. There will be 2½ days of conference, and consideration is being given to having one "public" session during this time. The Conference is to be held at the Hotel Meridien, Port Maillot, Paris, and it is being organised by the French Asbestos Association - Association Française de l'Amiante (AFA).

Other Conferences

35. Amongst the forthcoming conferences shown on our latest list (No. 23) are:
- a) 4th AIA International Colloquium on Dust Measurement, Edinburgh 21-23 September 1982.
 - b) International Conference on Fibrous Dust, Strasbourg, 4-8 October 1982.
 - c) ILO Conference, Geneva - June 1983.

AIA PUBLICATIONS, MEMORANDA AND CIRCULARS

36. The following AIA Health and Safety Publications have been printed:-
- a) Recommended Control Procedure (RCP) Nos. 1 to 6, 8 and 9. Some of these RCP's are available in various languages (see AIA Information Memorandum No. 7/81).
 - b) Recommended Technical Method (RTM) - No. 1. This is now available in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. A new (up-dated) edition has just been printed in English.
 - c) AIA Information Memoranda (AIM's) - The latest AIM distributed is No. 1/82 on "The Training of Industry Doctors".
 - d) AIA Information Circulars (AIC's) - The latest AIC is No. 31 which was distributed on 26 August 1982.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The World Health Organisation (WHO)

37. Some progress has been made in tracing the origin of alleged criticisms within the U.N. concerning asbestos-cement pipes and drinking water. It appears that there is a WHO Working Party (which includes US - EPA members) charged with investigating water purity world-wide and, amongst other possible pollutants, asbestos has been considered. Thus it is very likely that news of an impending WHO report on water purity and asbestos (even though asbestos is only one of many possible pollutants being investigated) might have caused authorities concerned with implementing asbestos-cement projects to delay their decisions on starting. We understand that a draft of the report written earlier this year

stated that there was no evidence of danger arising from the use of drinking water carried in A/C pipes. We hope that the final report which is expected to be published by the end of the year, will include this positive statement.

38. It should be noted that there is no conclusive evidence either from experiments with animals or from human experience over more than fifty years that harmful effects can result from the use of drinking water carried by asbestos-cement pipes. The mass of the literature* confirms no correlation between drinking water and increased cancer rates.
39. Only two scientific studies of any significance and standing have suggested such a correlation; one by Kanarek, Conforti et.al. and a follow-up paper by Conforti, Kanarek et.al.†
40. However, both these papers have been seriously criticised and faulted by a number of authorities including Dr Kevin Browne; Dr Kenny Crump; Dr Paul Kotin; Dr I T T Higgins; Dr J Wister Meigs; Dr Robert Murray; the Department of Health Services, California and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
41. Research on this important question must continue in order finally to establish the complete safety of such water and we look forward to the WHO Report.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

42. The Air Management Policy Group of the OECD Environment Committee is considering a paper "Control of Toxic Substances in the Atmosphere - Asbestos". The draft is due to be completed by the end of this year. We hope that Member Associations (either dealing directly with their respective Government representatives on OECD or through their National Industrial Federations, who, as members of BIAC**, can advise OECD), will try and ensure a balanced report. We have written to those Member Associations concerned.

* These include studies by The American Water Works Association (AWWA) (1974); Dr T J Masson (1974); Dr B S Levy (1976); Dr T R Fears (N.C.I.) (1976); Dr T Wigle (1977); Dr J M Harrington (1978); and Dr J Wister Meigs (1980).

† Both entitled "Asbestos in Drinking Water and Cancer in the San Francisco Bay Area" (the first dealt with 1969-1971 and the second 1969-1974).

** BIAC - Business and Industry Advisory Committee

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

43. It has been reported that ports in Columbia add a 100% "danger" surcharge to shipments of asbestos even though the fibre has been properly packaged and containerised. We have discussed this with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO - previously known as the U.N. Governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation - IMCO) and it appears that the wording of the relevant rule needs amending. This can only be done at biennial (six monthly) meetings of the "Dangerous Goods" Committee of IMO. We have asked one of our Members to try and take action on this matter since what happens in one country may start happening in others!

The International Labour Organisation (ILO)

44. To help produce an ILO "Code of Practice" on Asbestos we sent the ILO Secretariat an AIA Draft Code of Practice in January 1982. This was acknowledged. We have heard no more officially but we understand that asbestos may be discussed at the next ILO Governing Body meeting in November 1982. The object may be to put asbestos on the agenda of the ILO Annual Conference in June 1984. This would be one year too early (as the following table shows) and we are advising members separately on the matter.
45. A likely sequence of events would be as follows:-
- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Jan-Dec 1982 | A Draft Code of Practice on Asbestos is drawn up by the ILO Secretariat. |
| Jan 1983 | The ILO asks members for nominations to form a Tripartite Committee of 15 Experts on asbestos (5 Government, 5 Industry, 5 Union). |
| March-April 1983 | The ILO Secretariat circulate their Draft Code of Practice on asbestos to ILO Members for comment. |
| Sept 1983 | A meeting of the Tripartite Committee of Experts on Asbestos takes place which will consider Members' comments on the ILO draft and will draw up the Code of Practice in final form. |
| Nov 1983 | The ILO Governing Body meets to decide the ILO Conference Agenda for June 1985. Having considered the Code of Practice on Asbestos as agreed by the Experts it will decide whether to include asbestos as an item for June 1985. |

March-April 1984

If asbestos is to be on the agenda for June 1985, a Draft Questionnaire and other papers on asbestos are sent to ILO Members in preparation for the ILO Conference in June 1985.

June 1985

The Annual ILO Conference takes place - (asbestos possibly on the agenda).

The European Trades Union Congress (ETUC)

46. Owing to a misunderstanding the ETUC were not invited early enough to the World Symposium on Asbestos and as a result they subsequently boycotted the Symposium. We have since had discussions with them but must bear in mind that they do not represent all unions in Europe.

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS COUNTRIES

47. Reports from Member Associations are distributed twice a year as an Annex to AIA Governing Council Minutes. The following items are either of particular interest or have come in since the last report was circulated.

Australia (The South Pacific Asbestos Association (SPAA) also includes Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore)

48. The Health & Medical Authorities in Australia, under sectional pressure and very much against industry's advice (who were represented on the Committee concerned) have sponsored some new regulations concerning asbestos which will include the following:

- 1 f/ml for Chrysotile and Amosite and 0.1 f/ml for Crocidolite.
- A compulsory label for all asbestos goods to state that asbestos dust may cause serious damage to health including cancer.

The fibre levels are likely to be adopted also in New Zealand.

49. However, anti-asbestos publicity in Australia has slackened considerably.
50. Malaysia and Singapore may form a new Asbestos Association separate from SPAA.

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 - A compulsory label for all asbestos goods to state that asbestos dust may cause serious damage to health including cancer.
- The fibre levels are likely to be adopted also in New Zealand.
49. However, anti-asbestos publicity in Australia has slackened considerably.
50. Malaysia and Singapore may form a new Asbestos Association separate from SPAA.

Canada

51. Phases I and II of the Royal Commission on Asbestos hearings are now completed. These focussed on topics other than workmen's compensation. Phase II was the more formal phase and AIA/NA have produced a Summary of this which is a most useful reference for the industry in its defence of reasonable regulations.
52. Phases III and IV centre on issues of workmen's compensation, Phase III (like Phase I) dealing with the oral presentation of written submissions and Phase IV (like Phase II) dealing with the calling of witnesses.
53. Against a background of serious cut backs in mine production due to the world economic recession, the Institute of Occupational & Environmental Health (IOEH) and the Institute for Research & Development on Asbestos (IRDA) have created a central body for information on asbestos called the Canadian Asbestos Information Centre (CAIC). The CAIC has financial backing and support from both the Canadian and Quebec Governments and from all the Canadian asbestos producers.
54. The aim of CAIC is to ensure better coordination and more effective dissemination of information about asbestos across Canada and throughout the world.
55. CAIC's roles and objectives include:
 - a) promoting the safe use of asbestos
 - b) distributing technical and scientific data
 - c) promoting safety standards and practices
 - d) encouraging Governments to institute adequate standards and control measures
 - e) giving special consideration to countries which have no standards or regulations
56. Clearly these objectives parallel in some measure those of AIA and it will be necessary to ensure close collaboration in furthering our mutual aims.
57. The CAIC is governed by a Board of Directors (representing the sponsors) one of whom is elected President (currently Mr Michael Prus). An Executive Vice President is to be appointed to be responsible for Governmental relations with Ottawa. As from 1 June 1982 a Director General, Mr Georges Dahmen, was appointed who is responsible for day to day operations. CAIC's address is 1130 Sherbrooke Street West, Suite 410, Montreal, Quebec H3A 2M8, Canada.

France

58. The French Asbestos Association (Association Francaise de l'Amiante - AFA) continues to foster close relations with the news media by means of press conferences. These explain the achievements of the French Asbestos Industry in health matters. The industry has had a very good understanding with the Government and with civil servants but with the change of Presidents this may necessitate some adjustment. The next AIA Biennial Conference will be held in Paris.

Germany

59. Following three years of public and scientific interest in carcinogenic substances including asbestos, stricter rules for the workplace were introduced in October 1980. Although these regulations were very difficult to comply with, industry felt that they could do so.
60. Unexpectedly in early 1981 strong attacks were made on asbestos by Mr Baum the Minister for the Interior and by the Trades Union Federation (DGB). The reason for these attacks was a report by the German Environment Office (UBA) - which is part of Mr Baum's Ministry - saying that asbestos was a general threat to the population because it had no known cancer threshold level. It should therefore be banned.
61. As a result of these activities the asbestos cement industry has had to come to an agreement with the Federal Government on a gradual reduction (30% to 50% reduction in three to five years) of the asbestos fibre content of manufactured articles. Other points in the agreement cover:
 - a) progress in the programme of fibre reduction for 1982
 - b) the need for a progress report on substitution
 - c) pre-processing of articles
 - d) the protective coating of articles
 - e) only specialised distributors to handle asbestos cement articles
 - f) dust free tools to be used
 - g) products to be labelled
62. The UBA Report is based on very suspect mathematical deductions provided by an American scientist. However to date it has not proved possible to repudiate successfully the allegations.

63. As a result of the anti-asbestos campaign, sales of all such products have been adversely affected in Germany.

64. The Asbestos Corporation has produced a booklet "The asbestos problem in Germany - an inventory of facts". The booklet is compiled by the Corporation to show the basic facts about asbestos so that anxiety and disquiet can be dispelled. In a very concise way it covers the relationship of asbestos with the economy; health; the workplace; the environment; and lastly, substitution. Copies are obtainable from AIA or from the Asbestos Corporation, Nordenham (see AIC No. 26/2).

Greece

65. The Greek Asbestos Association has been very active over the last few months in briefing their European Parliamentary Members and their Government representatives who are on the Working Parties in the EEC concerned with the DG III and DG V Directives (see paragraphs 5-10 above).

66. The satisfactory outcome of the asbestos debate in the European Parliament was greeted positively by the press and unions. (The Hellenic Confederation of Labour).

67. The current Draft Regulations on Asbestos should come into effect in 1983.

India

68. There is a certain amount of political and press activity against asbestos. Industry for its part is trying to convince Government to bring in national regulations on asbestos and health and not to leave the matter to individual States.

Israel

69. New draft regulations have been drawn up by the Government after a tripartite Asbestos Committee had given its findings. The regulations are balanced and positive and are now being discussed.

Japan

70. Some reports in the press have reflected medical and political concern over alleged dangers from asbestos to the general public. There have been specific references to pleural plaques and to asbestosis.

71. Industry is watching the situation carefully and is ensuring that all national rules and regulations concerning asbestos are strictly complied with. In addition certain actions are being undertaken by Member Companies in the Japan Asbestos Association designed to increase industry's awareness of Asbestos and Health problems and to improve liaison with Government departments.

Mexico

72. Industry is working with the appropriate Government authorities to ensure that adequate measures are taken for the control of dust emission from factories and the maintenance of standards at workplaces.

Sweden

73. New Swedish Asbestos Regulations came into force on 1 July 1982. In effect all asbestos is banned but exceptions are made for the repair or maintenance of asbestos cement and for technical uses such as brake-linings, clutches and glands (see AIC No. 23/4).

74. The criteria on which the Swedish Government Regulations Group based their new Regulations were set out in a document prepared for them by Dr W J Nicholson "Criteria Document for Swedish Occupational Standards - Asbestos and Inorganic Fibres". (See AIC No. 20/1). This document assumes that the dose response curve is a straight line passing through zero and that therefore there is no level below which conditions can be considered safe. Furthermore the calculations used are based on high level exposures (from many years ago) which are then extrapolated to low levels; this the author admits is a very approximate procedure. (See AIC No. 22/2).

United Kingdom

75. A recent British Television film has disturbed the calm situation that had prevailed for some considerable time in the United Kingdom. The TV film concentrated on the ill-health effects of asbestos, but did not emphasise that these were produced by conditions existing many years ago. The programme gave the impression that the general public was at risk today from ill-health due to asbestos dust; it also made serious allegations against the industry and mis-statements about health conditions in factories. These matters are being taken up by the UK Asbestos Association (the Asbestos Information Centre (AIC) both with the television authorities and with the UK Government department concerned (the Health & Safety Executive - H.S.E.).

76. The Industry's complaint is that the programme created unnecessary and widespread public alarm; serious loss of trade; disruption of good industrial relations and loss of equity share values. The H.S.E. is being asked to hold a full scale inquiry into the serious allegations made in the programme - which include that important medical evidence was withheld by industry from the Advisory Committee on Asbestos (the Simpson Committee) and that the general public is at risk to all forms and current uses of asbestos.
77. As a result of this request the Health & Safety Commission has now decided to commission four reviews. These are as follows:
1. A Medical review to see if any new evidence has become available since the ACA (Simpson) Report. The Chairman will be Dr K Duncan (H.S.E.'s Director of Medical Services) - (six months duration).
 2. A review to investigate further technical possibilities for controls in response to union request for lower levels (six months duration).
 3. A review of more acceptable respiratory equipment (six months duration).
 4. A longer-term medical review taking into account:-
 - a) A Report just published in the Annals of Occupational Hygiene Volume 25, No. 2, 1982 by W H Walton "The Nature, Hazards and Assessment of Occupational Exposure to Airborne Asbestos Dust: A Review".
 - b) A report by Dr I J Selikoff to the US Department of Labor, 1 June 1981:- "Disability Compensation for Asbestos Associated Diseases in the United States". (See AIC No. 14/5). The Chairman will be Sir Richard Doll and the review is expected to last for one year.
78. The Commission has also decided to put into effect from 1 January 1983 the control levels recommended in 1979 by the Advisory Committee on Asbestos (the Simpson Committee). These levels are:-
1. 1 f/ml for Chrysotile
 2. 0.5 f/ml for Amosite
 3. 0.2 f/ml for Crocidolite and a ban on its use
- These limits will be reviewed from time to time in the light of current data.

79. A recently published study (by the UK Medical Research Council Epidemiology Unit) of workers in an asbestos cement factory in Wales has shown that out of nearly 2,000 workers employed for at least six months between 1936 and 1977 there were no excess deaths from any asbestos-related disease (see AIC No. 30/4 and 5). This is the kind of positive data which we need in order to be able to counter some of the ill-informed criticism of industry.

United States of America

80. There has as yet been no regulatory action taken on asbestos by the current administration except that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a task force to review all asbestos regulations. In response to a very detailed representation from the Asbestos Information Association of North America (AIA/NA) the current Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Mr R Schweicker has disavowed the report of one of his predecessors, Mr Joseph Califano, on the estimates of cancer related to occupation. Mr Califano estimated the contribution of asbestos to cancer mortality as seventeen per cent; Mr Schweicker puts it at from one to three per cent.
81. The AIA/NA has produced a very useful small pamphlet (Asbestos: A Natural Substance for Modern Needs) which provides the reader with an overview of matters relating to asbestos and asbestos-containing products (see AIC No. 26/2).
82. Another useful pamphlet (a report which puts workplace cancer in the right perspective) is "Cancer, Pollution and the Workplace" by the American Industrial Health Council (AIHC) (see AIC No. 26/4).
- #### Asbestos Floor Tiles - a precautionary tale
83. A scientific team were measuring crocidolite fibre levels in an office block in Europe which had a ceiling sprayed with crocidolite. In the five bulk samples taken they also found chrysotile fibre and they assumed that these fibres came from asbestos tiles on the floor. The article stated that this was assumed "only in the absence of any other explanation". Two potential sources of chrysotile fibre were investigated (the possible use of asbestos products by workers in the building and the air conditioning system) but no rigorous checks seem to have been made.
84. However an article on this investigation was subsequently published in the US magazine "Science" which suggested that asbestos floor tiles were a serious source of potential indoor asbestos.

85. One of our Associations has pointed out in a letter to the Scientists some of the possible shortcomings in their paper. These are:-

- a) The chrysotile fibre count (max 170 ng/M³) was higher than the crocidolite count which is questionable since the ceiling had a friable surface whereas the tiles were a locked-in vinyl product.
- b) It is highly unusual to find a sprayed asbestos ceiling consisting only of crocidolite.
- c) Only five samples were taken in a six-floor building.
- d) Analytical techniques for quantifying and identifying environmental asbestos are currently very imprecise.

PUBLICATIONS BY THE ASBESTOS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Recommended Control Procedures

RCP1	The Control of Asbestos Dust
RCP2	Asbestos Cement Products
Insert	Catalogue of Tools for working with Asbestos cement products on site
RCP3	Asbestos Waste Materials
RCP4	Asbestos Fibres, Packaging, Handling and Transportation
RCP5	Asbestos Fibres, Bag Opening
RCP6	Asbestos Textile Products - Manufacture
RCP7*	Asbestos Textile Products - Fabrication and Use
RCP8	Repair and Renewal of Asbestos Insulation
RCP9	Protection equipment for use in the manufacture and use of Asbestos Products
RCP10*	Asbestos-Containing Friction Material. Application and Servicing

Recommended Technical Method

RTM1	Reference Method for the determination of Airborne Asbestos Fibre concentrations at Workplaces by Light Microscopy (Membrane Filter Method)
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* Not yet printed

31 August 1982

LIST OF
AIA INFORMATION MEMORANDA
(Note 1)

No.

1/78 The AIA Organisation Chart (23.9.79) (Note 2)

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1/79 The IOEH Documentation & Retrieval System on Asbestos (9.7.79)

2/79 The ILO "Action Level" Concept (24.7.79)

3/79 The EEC and Asbestos (31.10.79)

4/79 The Industry Viewpoint Concerning Asbestos (1.12.79)

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1/80 Units of Measurement of Airborne Concentrations of Dust Particles or Asbestos Fibres (20.1.82)

2/80 A Digest of Information Concerning the Association (31.1.80)

3/80 Summary of Main Features of Asbestos/Health Regulations in Member Countries (23.7.82)

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1/81 Draft Recommended National Regulations (for countries which have no statutory provision) (5.11.81)

2/81 Criteria for the Diagnosis of Asbestosis and Considerations in the Attributions of Lung Cancer and Mesothelioma to Asbestos Exposure (23.12.81)

3/81 Asbestos and Health in the Friction Material Industry (1.9.81)

4/81 Summary of Main Features of warning Labels in Member Countries (15.1.82)

5/81 The Code of Good Practice (27.5.81)

6/81 United Nations Organisations and Agencies (11.11.81)

7/81 AIA Publications - List of those translated into various languages (4.1.82)

8/81 The IMF and the Asbestos Industry (21.1.82)

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1/82 The Training of Industry Doctors in the Diagnosis of Asbestos-Related Disease (15.2.82)

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Notes: 1. The date of latest version is shown in brackets.
2. The date shown is for the chart. Annexes to the chart are amended on differing dates.

31 August 1982

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