DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

CDC, NIOSH

Minutes of Occupational Exposures to Asbestos Dust From Brake Linings Meeting

July 21, 1975

Attendees

See Attached

Proceedings

Dr. John F. Finklea, Director of NIOSH, welcomed the attendees. He stated that the purposes of the meeting were (1) to consider preliminary data on asbestos exposure among brake lining workers and (2) to discuss a future course of action based on this preliminary information. Dr. Finklea then turned the meeting over to Dr. Irving Selikoff of Mount Sinai for presentation of some of his work on this problem.

Dr. Selikoff described the background for our current concern. The health effects of asbestos are well known. However, the health hazard associated with asbestos in brake linings until recently has received little attention. It was thought that the intense heat generated from braking modified the asbestos and that brake lining dust contained insignificant amounts of asbestos fibers. Dr. Mancuso in 1963 did describe asbestos-related health effects in the manufacturing of asbestos for brake linings but apparently this caused little concern. In 1973, a case of mesothelioma was reported in a brake repair worker. This stimulated a re-examination of the problem. Dr. Selikoff consulted with Mr. Meyers of UAW, Mr. Cefalo of IAM and the Ford Motor Company and the group at Mt. Sinai initiated a study to determine if brake lining workers were exposed to significant levels of asbestos.

Dr. Selikoff introduced Dr. Langer of Mt. Sinai who reviewed the composition of brake linings and the breakdown products thought to occur from heat generated during braking. Previous studies did not demonstrate asbestos fibers in the amounts or prevalence as indicated by the current studies at Mt. Sinai However, recent studies at Mt. Sinai demonstrated typical chrysotile asbestos fibers along with a wide range of other forms of crystalline and fibrous materials. He emphasized that the composition of brake linings may differ, for example, brake linings in the U.S. and Great Britain and products here in the U.S. may have undergone many changes over the years. This is particularly important since recent data show that 20% of the new car market is made up of these imports. Further research is needed to characterize the asbestos

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