

INTRODUCTION

During the week of February 7-11, 1972, a special asbestos dust survey and a preliminary industrial hygiene were conducted at the American Brakeblok Division of the Abex Corporation, Winchester, Virginia. The main purpose of the asbestos dust survey was to evaluate the asbestos sampling technique used by the U.S. Public Health Service.

To date, the samples which were collected have not been analyzed; however, from past U.S.P.H.S. surveys and the present industrial hygiene survey, several conclusions can be drawn. The following paragraphs discuss plant operations and industrial hygiene practices along with conclusions and recommendations.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANT

The plant is located south of the city of Winchester and employs approximately 655 blue collar workers and 119 white collar workers. There is a doctor employed by Abex Corporation but he only visits this facility once or twice a year. A nurse is on duty full time however. A complete pre-employment physical is given and is repeated every two years. Chest X-rays are taken every year. Blood and urine samples are taken twice a year from those in the mixing area to check for lead. Abex employs an industrial hygienist full time. The Personnel Manager acts as the Safety Director and works through the foremen to implement safety programs.

The plant was constructed by Abex in 1947 for the purpose of manufacturing asbestos friction products. The total plant site consists of 44 acres with four main buildings amounting to 440,000 square feet. The buildings are two story structures with the mixing operations and dust collectors being located on the upper level.

Products of the plant include automotive, aircraft and industrial braking materials, ABK industrial bearings, and sintered metallic material for production of metallic friction products. Approximately 50 different braking material mixes are made by the company in order to comply with varying customer needs and specifications.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESSES

Both extruded and dry process brake linings are made along with ABK bearing material. Sintered metallic materials are made in a separate building