

Mount Sinai Study for NIOSH on Brake Repair Workers

Dr. Nicholson of Mount Sinai has been coordinating that group's efforts for NIOSH on a study, entitled, "Investigation of Health Hazards in Brake Lining Repair and Maintenance Workers Occupationally Exposed to Asbestos." Dr. Nicholson had talked with Mr. Wagner and Mr. Drislane at the Institute offices in 1978 concerning background on, and the history of brake lining repair. In January 1979 a draft was submitted by Dr. Nicholson for suggestions and corrections as appropriate. This study is of major importance to the industry as it is the first attempt to study health records of brake repair workers. The background information on asbestos counts in the brake repair shop are apparently considerably less than some had suspected. The Institute reviewed Dr. Nicholson's report and commented on items of input that had come from the Institute. Also, this report was sent out to others for comment.

Bendix Corporation, in particular, made a detailed series of comments concerning this draft. The question is, where does this study stand? The Secretary wrote to Dr. Nicholson in July asking for information or an update on the status of this NIOSH sponsored study. No reply has been received. The members are not aware of any additional work or results that have been developed by Dr. Nicholson since this January draft. This agenda item was to review any possible new information concerning Dr. Nicholson's study, if it were available. It is concluded that there is nothing new available on this study at this time.

STATUS OF OSHA ASBESTOS STANDARD FOR INDUSTRY

The Chairman indicated that it is likely that there will be a new asbestos standard published by the Labor Department. It will most likely incorporate lower time weighted average (TWA) levels of asbestos exposure as well as peak or ceiling concentration levels. Mr. Armstrong referred to a study that had been reported in the August issue of the British Journal of Industrial Medicine. This study was a follow-up on studies that had been made earlier in Great Britain. This study indicated that asbestosis may be developed at exposure levels as low as 0.3 fibers per milliliter. It was suggested that this later information might serve as a basis for new exposure levels in the American workplace. It was noted that the Labor Department will not be tying in asbestos regulations with their new, so-called generic cancer policy. If anything, the Department will be moving towards new, more stringent occupational standards, at least as far as exposure levels are concerned.

OTHER BUSINESS

A member questioned the frequency of Committee Meetings. In the past few years, meetings have averaged one a year, whereas in the early days of the Committee there were two or three meetings per year. It was stated that meetings will be held as the subject matter dictates and there will not be any official time frame for a meeting. In other words, some items can be handled by mail ballots and the Committee will meet according to the needs of the Institute and its members.

The Chairman suggests that it is difficult to attend meetings at the Paramus location primarily because of the difficulty in getting from the airport to New Jersey hotels and the office. A member suggested that the next committee meeting be at an airport location for the ease of attendance. One member suggested the Pittsburgh Airport and another suggested Newark. The Secretary