

Legislation**HOUSE SCHEDULES OSHA OVERSIGHT HEARINGS; 80 BILLS ARE PENDING**

The House Select Subcommittee on Labor scheduled oversight hearings on the Occupational Safety and Health Act on June 25-26.

Over 80 bills are pending in the House and Senate to amend the Occupational Safety and Health Act. A chart of the bills appears in the Full Text section of this report.

Lead witness for the scheduled hearings this month will be Richard B. Berman, labor law director, U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Other witnesses include Leonard Dodson, safety committee chairman, Associated General Contractors of America; Clyde Roberts, National Association of Manufacturers; Congressman David Towell (R-Nev); Robert H. Doyle, National Society of Professional Engineers; Robert M. Clyne, American Cyanamid Company; and William E. McCormick, American Industrial Hygiene Association.

A number of the bills pending before the House deal with differentiating between light and heavy construction standards and others would provide for an on-site consultation. The latter topic is given the best chance of serious attention by the House.

In the Senate, Senator Peter H. Dominick's (R-Colo) bill, S 1147, which he attached as an amendment to the non-profit hospital bill and which was subsequently defeated (Current Report, May 9, p. 1539), would have significantly changed the law. The Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee is expected to hold hearings on OSHA sometime this summer.

Health Hazards**MAJORITY OF COMMENTS PROTEST PROPOSED VINYL CHLORIDE STANDARD**

A majority of comments on the standard for vinyl chloride proposed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Current Report, May 9, p. 1539) were in opposition, stating that if the standard were adopted numerous businesses would be forced to shut down.

Deadline for comments was June 10 on the OSHA proposal which calls for "no detectable level" of exposure. A public hearing will be held June 25 in Washington, D.C. (Current Report, May 30, p. 1672).

G. Frederick Hanna, regulatory agency liaison, Borg-Warner Chemicals, Washington, W. Va., said in order to evaluate the impact of the proposal, it is essential that details of the approved monitoring, air sampling, and analytical procedures be made available to all involved. If there are preferred techniques and specific items of equipment required to assure the necessary accuracy and sensitivity, these should be identified, he added.

Allan J. Topol, Covington and Burling, Washington, D.C., representing Tenneco Chemicals, Inc., Saddle Brook, N.J., objected to the proposal stating that it lacks adequate scientific support, is not justified in view of the long safety record of the industry, cannot be feasibly achieved in view of the current technological capability,

and will, if put into effect, require either complete shutdown or drastic reduction of production in the vinyl chloride industry with attendant severe consequences in numerous other sectors of the economy.

PVC Production

H. M. Walker, Dickinson, Tex., said polyvinyl chloride (PVC) is probably the most important industrial polymer and the least replaceable. The automobile industry and the wire and cable industry could scarcely survive without PVC, he said. The entire concept of dosage was forgotten in the proposal, he said. "The interaction of living matter with foreign materials is controlled always by the parameters of concentration and duration," he added.

Walker said he is not aware of any reports where cancer was produced by a single short-duration application of a carcinogenic material. In general, repeated applications are necessary until a significant threshold has been exceeded. "There is no reason to believe that vinyl chloride is any different in this respect," Walker said.

Referring to personal experimentation, Walker said evidence indicated to him that the "level of susceptibility in humans is of the order of seven to ten parts per million-hours dosage. This is the data to use in standards setting," he said.

Instrumentation

Donald H. Strodel, director, engineering, Environmental Systems Development Corporation, Charleston, S.C., urged that instrument experts be consulted as to what can be reliably expected in the way of detectable levels of measurement. Control measures could then be stated in terms of measurement by certain instruments or their equivalents, he noted.

Edward J. Malek, executive vice president, Joanna Western Mills Co., Chicago, Ill., said the investigations to date by no means support the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recommendations calling for "no detectable level," of vinyl chloride as determined by a sampling and analytical method capable of detecting concentrations of one ppm plus or minus 50 percent.

Emory G. Cook, president, Cook Laboratories, Norwalk, Conn., said 1910.93 (q) (a) (1) is in conflict with 1910.93 (q) (c) (4) in that the term "capable" is not defined regarding meaning and intent. Cook pointed out that PVC in powder form is capable always of releasing detectable levels.

He said also that 1910.93 (q) (b) (2) does not adequately define PVC, that 1910.93 (q) (b) (4) does not adequately define "contaminated," and 1910.93 (q) (b) (6) does not adequately define "detectable level."

Possible Shutdowns

Many manufacturers and processors said the proposed standard would put them or their suppliers out of business. Among them were: Jo-Gal Shoe, Inc., Lawrence, Mass.; Sportsmen's Plastics, Inc., Leominster, Mass.; Montrose Products Co., Auburn, Mass.; Spherex, Inc., Seabrook, N.H.; Multicolor Co., Hatfield, Mass., a manufacturer of vinyl wall covering; American Universal, Inc., New York, N.Y., a manufacturer of vinyl tablecloths and accessories; Hubbard Apiaries, Onsted, Mich., a honey packager; Extrudync, Inc., Amityville, N.Y.; J. F.

McElwain Co., Nashua, N.H., a shoe manufacturer; Middlebury Mouldings, Inc., Middlebury, Ind., a mobile homes supplier; American Vinyl Co., Hialeah, Fla., a manufacturer of extruded vinyl profiles; Express Tool Co., Miami, Fla., distributors of vinyl tubing; Crown Industries, Fremont, Ohio, processors of PVC; G.S. and Plastics Co., manufacturer of corrosion resistant products, organic coatings, fusion powders, and plastisols; and Forder Industries, Inc., Wales, Fla., extruder of PVC pipe.

Paul B. Stelzner, corporate secretary, Fabric Finishers, Inc., Coshocton, Ohio, said the regulation would cause his company to default on several million yards of fabric for finishing under contract to the Federal Government, as well as force the company out of business.

Variances

BETHLEHEM STEEL GRANTED VARIANCE ON FLOOR OPENING GUARDING REQUIREMENTS

Bethlehem Steel Corporation received a standards variance from floor hole guarding requirements from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration on June 11.

The variance was issued to the company's Sparrows Point Plant, Sparrows Point, Md., for 1910.23 (a) (8) (i) and (ii) requiring that every floor hole be guarded by a standard railing and toeboard or a floor hole cover hinged in place.

The company maintained that its process of manufacturing steel rods necessitates a floor opening where standard guard rails could not be used since coiled rods could become entangled. Instead, chain guardrails, a pipe rail, and toeboards are used. In addition, unauthorized personnel are not permitted in the work area and safety programs and inspections are used.

It is expected that the company will be in compliance with the standard by June 30, 1974, after a new system which will completely cover the floor opening is installed.

OSHA's announcement of the grant of variance will appear in a future Reference File supplement.

Standards

OSHA PROPOSES GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS RULE FOR WET LOCATIONS

All 120 volt, 15 and 20-ampere receptacles used in work situations where electricity is easily conducted would be required to have approved ground fault circuit protection under a standard proposed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration on June 11.

The requirement for ground fault circuit interrupters was included in the 1971 edition of the National Electrical Code adopted by OSHA in 1910.309 and 1926.400. On the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health and a petition from the National Constructors Association, the January 1, 1974, effective date of the requirement was deferred (Current Report, December 6, p. 862).

A hearing on the proposed requirement was held by

OSHA on February 26 (Current Report, February 28, p. 1225).

The OSHA proposal appears in the Full Text of this report. Comments are invited until August 9.

Health Hazards

MCA ANNOUNCES FOUR NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS INTO VINYL CHLORIDE EFFECT

Four new projects to research the carcinogenicity of vinyl chloride as it relates to humans were announced by the Manufacturing Chemists Association on June 6.

The studies will be funded by producers involved in synthesis and polymerization of vinyl chloride. The projects were approved unanimously by the NAM's board of directors during its annual meeting in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va.

The research program includes the following:

- (1) A study of animal metabolism.
- (2) A study of teratogenesis (animal fetus).
- (3) Animal chronic inhalation studies at concentrations below 50 parts per million, in an effort to identify a "no-effects" level.

(4) An acute inhalation experiment in which animals will be subjected to a massive exposure simulating conditions which might be experienced by a community exposed to a tank car rupture in a transportation accident. The animals would be observed over their lifespan.

The funding companies and MCA consider it essential that the program be expanded to determine the conditions necessary to assure the safety of workers involved in the manufacture and use of the products and of the plant neighborhoods in which they are made.

The scientific information developed from the research program will be disclosed publicly without restriction, MCA said. Further, as determined appropriate to the advancement of the program, technical reports will be developed and made publicly available on work practices, industrial hygiene monitoring and analysis, and the medical surveillance of exposed workers.

Two of the research projects will be conducted by The Dow Chemical Company. The other projects will be conducted by Industrial BIO-TEST Laboratories, Inc. BIO-TEST has been conducting vinyl chloride animal exposure studies, under contract to MCA for administration, since February 1, 1973. Results of the study have been announced on a continuing basis (Current Report, April 25, p. 1478).

Results of another study, documenting the health experience of present and former employees who have worked with vinyl chloride, were released on May 7 of this year (Current Report, May 16, p. 1589). Tabershaw-Cooper Associates, Inc., conducted the study.

All findings have been reported immediately to government agencies concerned with the vinyl chloride problem, MCA said. This practice will be followed in respect to the new studies.

MCA estimated the four projects would cost a minimum of \$400,000 to \$500,000. Because of the fluid status of scientific knowledge and regulatory climate in