

Martinsville, Virginia
June 11, 1969

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ASKED BY INSULATORS

1. What are early symptoms of asbestosis?

Asbestosis is caused by the inhalation of small particles of asbestos. There is apparently some chemical reaction within the lungs to the asbestos as well as an irritating effect by the fibers of asbestos. There are several factors in the development of this disease that should be noted. Of the three common kinds of asbestos available one kind is much more toxic than the other two and we do not use the more toxic kind. The size of the fibers inhaled have a definite bearing on how much is inhaled and how far into the lungs these can be breathed. The amount of asbestos in the air obviously affects how much is inhaled; further, the number of hours of exposure per day will influence how much is inhaled. Another factor we do not have any measurement of is the resistance of any individual that might be exposed.

The most common symptom experienced by those people that have been diagnosed as having asbestosis is shortness of breath on exertion. Obviously, this is also a symptom of many other diseases which include not only pulmonary or chest conditions but any systemic illness and especially circulatory illnesses. The second most common symptom is a dry hacking cough. Other symptoms do occur when the disease is more advanced.

2. Can asbestosis be cured, and how?

When asbestosis has developed enough to be recognized I do not believe it is curable. By this I mean that I do not believe the asbestos can be removed from the lungs; however, we would certainly not allow any further exposure to asbestos or any other type of pulmonary irritant. This again points to why we are continually monitoring the conditions under which we work and the preventive measures that we have insisted upon such as good ventilation and masks. In this instance prevention is the only cure that is of any great value.

DUP 0901246