

September 27, 1976

MOTOR Magazine
1790 Broadway
New York, New York 10019

Attention: Mr. Robert J. Cerullo

Dear Mr. Cerullo:

This is to reply to your letter of September 20, 1976 concerning Dr. Selikoff's write-up in the Daily News.

In answer to the questions in your letter—yes, most brake linings on today's cars contain asbestos. The disc brake and drum brake linings used on most American passenger cars and trucks contain about 50-60% asbestos. The asbestos is "locked in" to a matrix of resin and other materials. The asbestos by itself is not free. The problem with asbestos occurs if a shop grinds and cuts brake lining segments without good dust collection systems. Also, there is a problem during the removal of old brake linings preparatory to a relining. During removal, dust from the brake system can be inhaled if a mechanic uses a air hose or other procedures that tend to raise dust in the shop. It had been common practice in brake shops to use air hoses to clean off brakes. It is not a good practice.

As regards your question concerning my reaction to Dr. Selikoff's remarks, I did not read the article fully. I did see the headlines in the New York Daily News. I am not a medical authority and am in no position to discuss epidemiological data on which Dr. Selikoff projected this high mortality for people repairing brakes. If those working with brakes in service centers are sufficiently alarmed by Dr. Selikoff's remarks to initiate good work practices in the shop, his remarks may be helpful. As regards the accuracy of his remarks, I don't believe I'm qualified to comment.

Along this line, I might suggest contacting the Asbestos Information Association, (AIA) 1835 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Because of the proposed OSHA amendments concerning asbestos in the workplace the AIA has undertaken costly consultant studies on the difficulties with the OSHA regulations and the medical evidence in support of the proposed amendments. While they may have data concerning the medical aspects of past occupational exposures to asbestos available, epidemiological data is not conclusive. There