

FROM: G. W. FAIRBANKS

TO: MR. J. B. WALKER

March 7, 1973

RE: REPLACEMENT OF ASBESTOS CONTAINING INSULATING BLOCK

Recently a letter was received from A. J. Sortschev and R. P. Carter advising of problems with block type insulation containing asbestos. The letter covered two main points--the first is to discontinue the use of block insulation containing asbestos. This has been done in all areas of the plant. The second is how to deal with the removal of asbestos containing block insulation during refractory repairs or relining. The letter requests that we describe our plans to handle the required control of asbestos.

The arrangement of our organization indicates that this problem can best be handled by dividing it along Fabricating and Smelting lines. I will develop our program for the Fabricating Division, including the Ingot Plant. I suggest that the Smelting program be handled by someone in that organization.

Fabricating Division including the Ingot Plant

Approximately 1964 we discontinued the use of "hard" block type insulation with about 8% asbestos such as J. M. Superex and Carey 19 in the Ingot Plant. We standardized on Monoblock because it is softer and causes less distortion of furnace shells. In the years since the change, the hard insulation has been worked out of the system. Monoblock does not contain asbestos. Pittsburgh designed, and specified furnaces, however, have used J. M. Superex more recently. We have one remaining furnace, #14S, in which all the block is Superex. This furnace is scheduled for rebuild in the second or third quarter of this year. Removal of the old lining will involve exposure to asbestos dust from the block insulation. Our plans to control asbestos dust exposure are to require the use of approved respirators and supply coveralls for the men involved in removing the old refractory lining. Clean up will be by the use of a vacuum cleaner, rather than sweeping.

The remainder of the Fabricating Division furnaces involve heat treating furnaces, controlled atmosphere, and air atmosphere annealing furnaces, aging ovens, reheat furnaces, preheat furnaces, etc. The insulating materials usually are mineral wool blanket and block insulation. The block insulation may or may not contain asbestos. Where the purchase orders are available, we probably can

determine the specific brand, and from the brand, the asbestos content. In most cases, however, the purchase orders have been destroyed so we cannot determine in advance the asbestos content of the insulation. In general, the asbestos containing blocks can be identified by inspection of the relative hardness and color. The white, hard material contains asbestos (Carey 19 and Superex) and the dark brown, soft material (Monoblock) does not.

We have no plans to remove, relocate, or modify any of these furnaces so we are not facing an immediate problem. In the future, we will have to remain alert to the dangers of asbestos, and make a determination in each instance whether or not asbestos is present. Where asbestos is present, respirators, coveralls, and vacuum cleaning dust control will be required.

G. W. FAIRBANKS

GW:lt

CC: Messrs. W. Parr
H. Dasio, W. Molnar
B. P. Wilkerson, R. H. Snedgrass

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