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Mr. L.S. Hart

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Mr. J. Waddell,
Turner Brothers Asbestos Co. Ltd.

RIM/JG

16th June 1967

c. RM/GMP/C11(2)

No doubt you will have seen from the national press that the insulation engineers in Scotland have been carrying out unofficial strikes correlated to the health hazard with using asbestos. The engineers recently had a wage claim of 12/6d per hour turned down and I think there is a certain amount of reaction which has sparked off the current attitude.

I am enclosing a copy of a report published in the Glasgow Herald on Wednesday, 14th June, which gives the background to the present position.

We are doing everything possible to persuade the workers that the Ministry and employees are treating the subject with top priority and I understand that the Association may be enlisting the assistance of the Asbestos Information Committee.

It is extremely difficult when workers are in a militant mood to persuade them to act rationally but we feel that as the strike is insufficient, by next week things may be operating normally.

Robert M. Wilson

Encl.

P.S. I have just received a copy of Shell Chemicals U.K. Ltd Code of Practice for handling asbestos materials and this is attached.

"ASBESTOS HAZARDS" PROTEST

Insulating engineers in the West of Scotland, on strike because, they say, they are not being given sufficient protection against asbestos dust and allied health hazards, claimed last night that the stoppage was spreading to Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen.

They estimated that all but 100 of the 700 men in Scotland had stopped work. A meeting of strikers in Glasgow yesterday agreed to continue the strike, and they are not expected to meet again until Friday. The leaders of the unofficial strike are considering holding a demonstration in Glasgow that day.

Mr James McKenna, insulating engineers' branch secretary for Scotland of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said the union wanted the men to return to work to allow negotiations to continue. "We feel, however, that negotiations have gone on too long," he said.

DOCTORS' REPORT

A report prepared recently by two Glasgow physicians about asbestosis — caused by inhaling asbestos dust — was read to those who attended yesterday's meeting. It stated that without a lung biopsy a diagnosis of asbestosis cannot be made.

"In view of the grave hazards to health which even very short periods of exposure to asbestos can eventually cause, the increased uses of asbestos must be viewed with disquiet."

The report says the incidence of asbestosis appears to be increasing, and it may come to assume great public health importance because of the increased importation and more widespread use of asbestos.

The strikers claim that in the past five years there have been 53 cases of asbestosis in Glasgow and 14 deaths.

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1. SCOPE

1.1 This code of practice sets out the procedures to be adopted in the handling and application of Asbestos and Asbestos containing materials.

Note: It is stressed that the most important feature in the handling of asbestos is to contain the material and minimise the production and spread of dust.

1.2 Whether as principals or in a sub-contracting capacity all personnel handling asbestos or asbestos containing materials shall be required to observe this Code of Practice.

1.3 Contractors shall provide their own safety equipment and make arrangements for the servicing of same.

1.4 This code shall be prominently displayed in Workshops and Changing Rooms and a copy given to each of the supervisory staff concerned, who shall be responsible for its enforcement.

1.5 The procedures set out herein shall be observed unless dispensations are agreed in writing by a competent medical authority.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 In this specification the word "shall" indicates a requirement that is to be adopted in order to comply with the specification, while the word "should" indicates recommended practice.

2.2 Asbestos Products

2.2.1 Group A

Asbestos Moulded Sections
Calcium Silicate Sections
85% Magnesia Sections.

2.2.2 Group B

Calcium Silicate
Hardsetting Compound
Asbestos skimming plasters.
Sprayed asbestos cement
Super Plastic (85% Magnesia).

2.2.3 Group C

Resin Bonded
Keebush
Lamanil.

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2.2.4 Group D

Cement Asbestos (Hard)
Roofing Sheets
Rainwater Goods
Drain Pipes

2.2.5 Group E

Asbestos Rope, Yarn, Tape
Asbestos Blankets
Asbestos Millboard
Asbestos Feathers

2.2.6 Group F

Asbestos Gland Packing (Impregnated)
Compressed Asbestos Fibre Jointing

2.3 "Asbestos Workers" - All persons engaged in the handling and application of asbestos and asbestos produots.

2.4 "Non Asbestos Workers" - Any person other than the Asbestos Worker who might be contaminated during the handling, storage, application or disposal of asbestos products by Asbestos Workers or from the contaminated clothing, tools or equipment etc.

2.5 Protective Clothing shall comprise the following items:

2.5.1 Dust Mask - Siebe Gorman Mark 8 Face Mask or an equivalent approved by competent medical authority.

2.5.2 Closely woven cotton/terylene overalls with hood.

2.5.3 Closely woven cotton/terylene scarf.

2.5.4 Plastorome gloves or equipment.

Note: Special footwear is not included in the list as normal foot-wear is considered adequate protection.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1 Handling General

3.1.1 Controlling the dust is one of the most important factors in the handling of asbestos products and this should be out down completely, or kept to a minimum, to ensure the safe handling of these materials.

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3.1.2 In confined spaces adequate arrangements for ventilation must be made.

3.1.3 As much as possible of the preparatory work should be carried out under controlled conditions in a workshop provided specifically for this purpose.

3.1.4 The location of this preparatory work shall be at the discretion of the supervisor.

3.1.5 Workshop facilities - There shall be free circulation of air around the area which shall be planned to minimise dust settlement. Portable dust extraction units shall be provided to exhaust the dust from floors cutting benches etc. and mobile hoppers shall be used to collect the extracted waste. Piped water should be laid into this area and sprays provided for material damping.

3.1.6 Protective clothing shall be worn by "Asbestos Workers" at all times when:

a) Mixing or preparing a wet mix of any material or composition containing asbestos.

b) Cutting insulating materials containing asbestos by hand in confined areas.

c) Using a portable or other power driven tool to cut materials containing asbestos.

d) Machining asbestos resin bonded materials.

e) Spraying asbestos containing compositions.

f) Applying or stripping lagging containing asbestos.

g) Cleaning up locations where asbestos containing materials have been worked or applied.

h) Emptying or filling hoppers or sacks used in this connection.

3.2 Instruction

3.2.1 All "Asbestos Workers" shall receive instruction in the correct methods to be used when working with asbestos and asbestos containing materials.

3.2.2 Instruction shall also be given in the operational use, care and maintenance of the protective clothing as defined in para. 2.5.

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3.3 Hygiene

3.3.1 Approved masks will be issued to "Asbestos Workers" on a personal issue basis and they will be maintained and serviced by the Fire and Safety Department.

3.3.2 Welfare facilities shall be provided for "Asbestos Workers" to change into the approved protective clothing and for de-dusting on his return from duty. They shall comprise:-

a) Facilities for the de-dusting and handling of soiled protective clothing.

b) Hot and Cold washing and shower facilities for use before redressing into everyday clothes.

c) Locker facilities for everyday clothes and personal effects shall be completely separated from those required for protective clothing.

d) Any other room facility provided shall also be separated from the de-dusting and wash rooms.

e) Vacuum equipment with flexible hose located adjacent to, but separate from, the washing and shower facilities and the locker room.

3.3.3 It is prohibited at all times to use compressed air for cleaning purposes.

3.4 Personal Hygiene

3.4.1 All traces of dust shall be removed from protective clothing at the end of each spell of duty by means of vacuum equipment.

3.4.2 Care shall be exercised to ensure footwear is completely free from dust when transferring out of the de-dusting chamber.

3.4.3 The asbestos worker shall change into his everyday clothes for all meals.

3.5 Laundering

Overalls and scarves shall be vacuum cleaned before collection by the launderer.

They shall be checked before dispatch and packed into polyethylene bags, sealed, and be clearly marked "Asbestos Contaminated Clothing, wet before handling".

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3.6 Application

3.6.1 Materials, (Group "A")

Site work in this category raises little dust and when carried out in the open air there is no hazard to 'non-Asbestos Workers'.

3.6.2 Materials, (Group "B")

Mixing-separate workshop facilities shall be provided for wet mixing asbestos compounds - this should be carried out in polyethylene bags.

3.6.3 Materials, (Groups "C" and "F")

The machining of asbestos impregnated materials must for practical reasons continue to be carried out in a machine shop.

In such cases a portable dust extraction unit shall be used with the flexible hose end located as close as possible to the working face.

A mobile hopper clearly identified shall be provided to collect the extracted waste.

3.6.4 Materials, (Groups " D" and "E")

Materials in this group shall be cut or shaped in the Segregated Workshop facilities provided.

Whenever possible the materials should be wetted with water immediately before cutting or shaping.

3.7 Spraying Asbestos Compounds

3.7.1 Spraying asbestos compounds on to equipment should be carried out by specialist sub-contractors using approved equipment.

3.7.2 To reduce the risk to 'non-Asbestos Workers', work of this nature should be carried out during silent hours when possible.

3.7.3 The area shall be defined by warning notices fixed in prominent positions and suitable plastic shrouding hung around the perimeter to contain loose asbestos fibres thrown out by the spraying process. Similarly, plastic ground sheets must be laid on the floor area to collect all waste material.

3.7.4 Effective pre-treatment of the fibre reduces the concentration of dust and spraying techniques utilising such pre-treatment shall be employed.

3.7.5 Whatever type of machine is being used, the asbestos fibre must not be removed from the dust-proof sacks in which it is supplied until it is fed into the machine in the prescribed manner. Care should be exercised in handling the sacks in order not to damage them.

3.7.6 Effective means shall be provided to collect and bag waste material, and scavenge the shrouding and ground sheeting of all loose fibres after this work is complete. After completion of the work reasonable delay time must be observed by all Asbestos Workers engaged in the operation, before removing their masks.

3.8 Stripping of Insulation

3.8.1 Before stripping, the ground area should be roped off to a safe distance and warning notices fixed in prominent positions. Polyethylene sheeting shall be suspended round the job to funnel the stripped insulation on to a suitable plastic ground sheet.

3.8.2 Wherever possible, some method should be employed to wet the insulation before it is removed from the equipment. If, for operational or other reasons, this is not practicable care must be exercised to keep the scale of the work within the capacity of the safety measures provided.

3.8.3 A vacuum cleaner shall be provided to clear loose particles from the surrounding sheeting and a mobile hopper used to collect the waste for bagging and ultimate disposal.

3.8.4 In confined areas a portable dust extraction unit may be required to supplement the vacuum cleaning equipment, particularly where effective damping down of the lagging material cannot be achieved.

4. DISPOSAL OF RESIDUE AND WASTE

4.1 Asbestos residue and Waste must be packed and sealed into heavy gauge polyethylene bags and placed in a special Marrel bin provided.

4.2 The bin shall be clearly labelled "ASBESTOS".

4.3 Arrangements shall be made with local authorities for the disposal of all waste asbestos materials referred to in para. 4.1.

5. PURCHASING REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Yarn, tape, cloth and similar materials should be supplied in shrouded plastic reels.

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5.2 All materials required for wet mixing should be purchased in pack form, supplied in sealed polyethylene bags, so that the wet mixing can be carried out in the bag.

5.3 Moulded sections should be supplied in sealed cartons.

6. STORAGE

6.1 A special area should be set aside for Storage.

6.2 Asbestos products in Groups 'A', 'B' and 'E' shall be stored in the cartons or sealed bags as delivered.

6.3 Where relatively large quantities of Groups 'A', 'B' and 'E' are involved facilities for dust extraction and humidity control will be required.

7. MEDICAL

7.1 Periodic clinical and radiological examination of Asbestos Works shall be carried out at the discretion of the Medical Officer.

ME/ETS/MWL/DV.
15th May, 1967