FILE NAME: Asbestos in Hair Dryers (HD)

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GENERAL ELECTRIC

GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY . . . . . 1285 BOSTON AVENUE
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT 06602, Phone (203) 334-1012

HOUSEWARES
AND AUDIO
BUSINESS
DIVISION

May 25, 1979

Honorable Sayde E. Dunn
Secretary
Consumer Product Safety Commission
1111 Eighteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20217

Dear Ms. Dunn:

The following response is submitted in reply to your order of May 14, 1979:

1. Q. State the name of your firm and the address of your principal place of business. Specify whether you are a manufacturer, importer and/or private labeler of the electric hair dryers described above.

A. The name and address of our business is as follows:

Housewares and Audio Business Division
General Electric Company
1285 Boston Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06602

The Housewares and Audio Business Division imports (purchases) and manufactures electric hair dryers.

2. Q. (a) Are asbestos materials now being used in dryers your firm is manufacturing, importing or labeling?

A. (a) Asbestos materials are not being used in the electric hair dryers now being imported (purchased), private labeled or manufactured.

Q. (b) Is the asbestos located where it is exposed to the air flow?

A. (b) Not applicable.

3. Q. (a) Have asbestos materials been used in dryers your firm has manufactured, imported or labeled within the last ten years?

3. A. (cont.) (a) Asbestos materials have been used in hair dryers imported (purchased) and manufactured during the last ten years.

Q. (b) Is the asbestos located where it is exposed to the air flow?

A. (b) The asbestos material was used where it was exposed to the airstream.

4. Q. If you answered yes to question 2(b) and/or question 3(b), please provide the following information, in the order listed, for each identifiable group of dryers. To facilitate review of the information, please provide this information in charts or by other means that will relate each item of information to a particular identifiable group of dryers.

Q. (a) Give identification information (e.g., brand name, style, model number and/or production date code number) and state whether the dryer is hand held, portable, free standing, etc.

Q. (b) Specify dates during which your firm manufactured, imported and/or labeled the dryers and the approximate number of dryers manufactured, imported and/or labeled during each date or time period.

Q. (c) Describe where the asbestos materials are located in the hair dryers (e.g., nozzle lining, hood lining, air passageway lining, wire insulation or motor insulation).

Q. (d) If you are the importer or private labeler, state the name and address of the manufacturer.

A. (a), (b), (c), (d) See Attachment "A" and "B" annexed to our response dated April 6, 1979 to CPSC Special Order of March 29, 1979.

Q. (e) If you are the manufacturer (or have access to this information) please explain what kind of asbestos material was used (type, grade, or other description), indicate the name and address of the distributor and/or manufacturer of the material if known, and give the reasons for the use of the asbestos material.

4. A. (e) (cont.) Asbestos was used because of its high temperature characteristics, low thermal conductivity and strength capability. Novabestos, bonded asbestos paper, woven asbestos yarn and asbestos rollboard has been used in various models.

American Felt Co. and Raybestos-Manhattan were suppliers for domestically produced products. Off-shore suppliers were used by Far Eastern vendors and manufacturing plants.

Q. (f) Describe the usual promotion, marketing and use patterns of your dryers.

A. (f) General Electric manufactures and sources hair dryers. We sell to distributors who in turn sell to dealers, as well as selling directly to dealers, and the dealers sell to the consuming public. There are other specialized sales channels such as premium accounts and stamp and incentive accounts.

5. Q. (a) Were asbestos materials used in dryers your firm manufactured, imported or labeled more than ten years ago?

A. (a) Asbestos materials have not been used in hand-held hair dryers imported (purchased), private labeled and manufactured more than ten years ago. See Attachment "B" annexed to our response dated April 6, 1979 to CPSC Special Order of March 29, 1979 covering non hand-held hair dryers manufactured by General Electric Company using asbestos materials.

Q. (b) If you answered yes, please state whether the asbestos is located where it is exposed to the air flow.

A. (b) See items identified in Attachment "B" annexed to our response dated April 6, 1979 to CPSC Special Order of March 29, 1979.

6. Q. (a)(i) Has your firm or anyone on its behalf conducted any tests of your dryers to determine whether your dryers emit respirable asbestos fibers into the air flow, or any other tests related to the use of asbestos in dryers?

A. (a)(i) Yes.

6. Q. (a)(ii) (cont.) If you answered yes, provide a description of such tests, and an explanation of where and how the reports may be obtained.

A. (a)(ii) See answer to question 6(c) infra.

Q. (b)(i) Do you know of any other tests or studies regarding the use of asbestos in hair dryers?

A. (b)(i) Yes.

Q. (b)(ii) If you answered yes, please provide a description of such tests, and an explanation of where and how the reports may be obtained.

A. (b)(ii) 1. Johns Manville Corporation Report presented to the staff of CPSC on June 9, 1979.

2. Environmental Defense Fund Petition and the Lab Report of EMV Associates.

3. National Bureau of Standards memo to Gale Wyer, CPSC dated May 2, 1979, entitled "Examination of Hairdryers From CPSC (#7166 and 7167) for Asbestos".

4. Testing now in progress at NIOSH for CPSC.

5. Test conducted by Portable Appliance Manufacturers Association PAMA of Canada available from PAMA.

6. Tests conducted for the Canadian government Minister Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Health and Welfare. Available through these offices in Ottawa.

These tests can be discussed with the parties responsible.

Q. (c) Please provide the name, address and telephone number of a person in your firm with whom the Commission staff could discuss these tests or testing of asbestos in hair dryers in general.

6. A. (c) (cont.) Robert W. Mazzacane
Manager-Product Safety and Standards
Housewares Engineering Department
General Electric Company
1285 Boston Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06602

Telephone: (203)382-3556

7. Q. Please provide the name, title, address, and telephone number of the person filing the response to this Order.

A. The writer has been delegated as the representative of the Chief Executive Office and authorized to make claims of confidentiality on behalf of the Company.

GENERAL ELECTRIC

6. A. (c) (cont.) Robert W. Mazzacane
Manager-Product Safety and Standards
Housewares Engineering Department
General Electric Company
1285 Boston Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06602

Telephone: (203)382-3556

7. Q. Please provide the name, title, address, and telephone number of the person filing the response to this Order.

A. The writer has been delegated as the representative of the Chief Executive Office and authorized to make claims of confidentiality on behalf of the Company.

With respect to the material in the foregoing response which references prior submittals, we hereby claim exemption from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 USC §552(b) and 18 USC §1905 or regulations issued thereunder, to the extent that such was previously claimed in said prior submittals. With regard to the information contained in the answer to question 4(e) herein, we claim exemption from disclosure for statements and references under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 USC §552(b) and 18 USC §1905 or regulations issued thereunder. This information is confidential, commercial information that would cause substantial financial harm if released to our competitors. It has never been released in any manner to any person who was not an employee or in a confidential relationship with the Company and is not commonly known within the industry nor is it readily ascertainable by outside persons with a minimum of time and effort.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Mazzacane

Robert W. Mazzacane, Manager
Product Safety and Standards
Housewares Engineering Department

Telephone (203)382-3556

RWM:mst

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT)
COUNTY OF FAIRFIELD) ss: Bridgeport May 25, 1979

Personally appeared, ROBERT W. MAZZACANE, signer and sealer of the foregoing instrument and affirmed and declared that the statements contained herein are true to the best of his information and belief.

Notary Public

My Commission Expires