FILE NAME: Asbestos in Hair Dryers (HD)

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AHS

GENERAL ELECTRIC

HOUSEWARES AND AUDIO BUSINESS DIVISION

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

November 30, 1979

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Division of Product Defect Correction
Compliance and Enforcement
CPSC

Mrs. Catherine Cook
Director, Division of Product
Defect Correction
Consumer Product Safety Commission
5401 Westbard Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland

Re: CPSC-ID 79-109

Dear Mrs. Cook:

Your letter of November 2, 1979, offered us the opportunity to comment on the final NIOSH report on hairdryer tests for asbestos emission and Dr. Nicholson's analysis of the report. We would like to make the following comment:

As originally conceived, the NIOSH test was intended to determine the presence and emission rate of asbestos fibers for hand-held hairdryers and tabletop hood dryers. The final report, however, included test results for a stand-mounted commercial dryer and a hand-held heat gun. The asbestos mass concentration values for these products was 7652 ng/m^3, far exceeding the maximum concentration from the hand-held and tabletop hood dryers of 39 ng/m^3. Portions of Dr. Nicholson's report, which was quoted by the media and repeated in the CPSC November 2 Newsletter, stated that the asbestos emissions from the "hairdryers" were "the highest we have measured in 8 years"(1) of surveys of environmental conditions. This statement is valid only if the commercial hairdryer and heat gun are included.

Dr. Nicholson's comment should have been directed to the commercial hairdryer only and he should not have characterized all of the products tested as if they were all in the same family. This gross characterization raises the question of fairness and objectivity of the analysis.

(1)Washington Post, November 4, 1979

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We would appreciate segregation of the test results on the commercial hairdryer and the heat gun from the hairdryer results when any further discussion of the NIOSH report are released to the public and an explanation of the incorrect characterization should be made in subsequent CPSC News Bulletins.

Very truly yours,

R W Mazzacane

Robert W. Mazzacane
Manager-Product Safety & Standards
Housewares Engineering Department

RWM/ls