

**Interoffice
Communication**

To: W. P. Swan

From: K. L. Fogg
Date: February 22, 1991
Subject: Ethylene Oxide

VISTA

Attached is a letter we received from Union Carbide on some recent information on possible health effects of EO exposure.

Please communicate this to your people. I will keep you informed as additional information becomes available.

K. L. Fogg

lag
Attachment

cc: JF CWT

VVV 000006031



UNION CARBIDE CHEMICALS AND PLASTICS COMPANY INC.

39 OLD RIDGEBURY ROAD, DANBURY, CT 06817-0001

INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS DIVISION

January 31, 1991

Dear Ethylene Oxide User,

As part of our continuing product safety communications program, we would like to share with you some information about a January 7, 1991 Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Section 8(e) filing regarding ethylene oxide.

Preliminary data became available in late 1990 from a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-sponsored ethylene oxide epidemiology study of over 18,000 male and female workers from 14 plants producing medical supplies and culinary spices. These data formed the basis for a filing by one of the participating companies with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 8(e). This notification to the EPA stated that there was no significant increase in mortality observed for cancer when all types are combined or for certain individual types of cancer including leukemia and cancer of the stomach, brain, or pancreas, even for those who worked the longest and were observed the longest. However, a statistically significant increase in mortality from certain types of lymphoma (i.e., cancer of the lymphatic system) was observed for male workers. These workers had potential exposure to ethylene oxide as a sterilant gas from the 1940's through the 1980's.

We are uncertain as to the interpretation of these new results from the NIOSH study, since we have only seen preliminary information. Peer reviewed reports are not yet completed by either NIOSH or ENSR Health Sciences, who has independently examined this worker population at the request of the Health Industry Manufacturers Association.

We have previously communicated in our Material Safety Data Sheet that ethylene oxide is a potential carcinogen and have recommended precautionary safe handling practices. We believe these precautions are still appropriate, and if followed, ensure protection of our employees and customers. When the final reports by NIOSH and ENSR Health Sciences are available, we will carefully review them and share the results with you.

Sincerely,

VVV 000006032

B. J. Brymer
Marketing Manager