REPORT SERIES

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"Safety on the Job Becomes a Major Job for Management" is the title of a feature article in the November issue of "Fortune".

The validity of this premise has been established; now management of American business must find ways to mount an efficient effort at manageable cost.

Business in the USA no longer has the luxury of setting its own pace in solving on-the-job safety and health problems. The Occupational Safety and Health Act changed that.

Industries facing the most difficult problems have found solutions; all management can learn from their examples.

"Report Series on OSHA" presents the problems and the solutions for examination.

Up to the present time most management has had to contend only with on-the-job safety, but the asbestos industry has, in addition, the serious problem of an occupational health hazard. In fact, the health hazard through exposure to asbestos dust is considered so serious that it has become the first permanent standard involving a health hazard to be promulgated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

When the hazard of asbestos dust is discussed, the asbestos plant that most often enters the discussion is Johns-Manville's Manville, New Jersey plant.

JM'S Manville plant . . . can it meet all of the OSHA standards and still operate profitably?

The bull's-eye in the target for critics of American Industry's occupational health record has been the Johns-Manville plant at Manville, New Jersey. Here at this plant, one of the oldest and largest asbestos processing plants in the USA, the significant incidence of diseases connected to exposure to asbestos dust was first spotlighted. Since these diseases appear ten [illegible] exposure, corrective measures taken today, or even those started ten years ago, cannot be judged as effective for certain for many more years to come. And so the argument as to whether enough is being done will continue.

During the month of November, at least two symposia on asbestos related diseases were held. The press release for the American Industrial Hygiene Association meeting on asbestos related diseases states *"The meeting may become one of a controversial nature."*

Meanwhile, asbestos processing at Manville continues on a best effort basis. This is not to say that all plants in the entire industry are also making a best effort.

Since 1961, complete records of dust and asbestos fiber samplings have been kept for the three operating divisions that comprise the Manville plant.

- In 1969, the asbestos fiber count from 761 of a total of 397 stations was over the then JM standard TLV of 6 fibers per cubic centimeters.
- In 1972 to date, the asbestos fiber count from 7 of 306 stations exceeded the OSHA standards of 5 fibers per cubic centimeter.

The program to reduce total dust and airborne asbestos fibers started at least ten years ago. The written and photographic records at Manville of these improvements over the years show how thorough and complete the change has been.

The dust collection equipment, originally installed had to be improved and upgraded year after year to meet ever more stringent JM standards. (At the imposition of the emergency asbestos standards by OSHA in December 1971, JM's own standards were comparable.)

Processes were improved and the handling of asbestos was changed from burlap bags opened in the room to sealed paper containers opened in an enclosed part of the processing system.

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