



INTER-COMPANY AND OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: T. Mekaru
Columbus, Ohio

FROM: N. M. Blackman

{ Dept
Branch
Division
Company

LOCATED AT: Leominster, MA

SUBJECT: SPI PAMPHLET

DATE: October 6, 1980

Enclosed is a copy of an SPI pamphlet entitled "PVC and Health Questions and Answers". This pamphlet appears to be several years old. We are planning to have a meeting with city and state officials at the Leominster plant on October 30, 1980 and we expect to furnish various pieces of literature to these officials. The enclosed pamphlet is one which we had planned on distributing, however, since it appears to be old, could you give us your opinion as to whether the answers to the questions are still appropriate. I would appreciate your response at your earliest convenience.

N. M. Blackman

NMB/cah

Encl.

cc: W. F. Gabel
✓ H. Rosenzweig
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PVC AND HEALTH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Since early 1974, vinyl chloride, the gaseous industrial chemical from which polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic is made, has been the subject of widespread misunderstanding regarding questions of occupational and public health. While a variety of erroneous and misleading impressions concerning vinyl chloride and PVC have been created in the public mind, the known facts, supported by extensive medical and technical research, are that:

1. The development of angiosarcoma of the liver, a rare form of cancer, from vinyl chloride exposure has been confined exclusively to the occupational setting.
2. Angiosarcoma may develop only after the inhalation of substantial amounts of vinyl chloride over an extended period of time.
3. There is no evidence of hazard to the general public either from exposure to the minute amounts of vinyl chloride that may be found in the air around PVC plants, or from the use of finished polyvinyl chloride products.

Following are some questions commonly asked about vinyl chloride and health. Answers are based on known scientific evidence and industry experience.

Question: What is PVC and how is it used?

Answer: Polyvinyl chloride or PVC is the second most widely used plastic resin in the United States. It is produced from vinyl chloride gas by a process called polymerization. The resin is, in turn, fabricated

into a wide variety of consumer and industrial products, including floor tile, curtains, shoes, electrical insulation, telephone equipment, medical-surgical devices, phonograph records, food packaging, upholstery, umbrellas and raincoats, luggage and sporting goods. Approximately 2.2 million American jobs are directly or indirectly dependent on the PVC industry.

Question: How serious an occupational hazard is vinyl chloride?

Answer: Over the past 15 years, fewer than 20 deaths from angiosarcoma have occurred among U.S. workers heavily exposed to vinyl chloride gas. The workers' jobs principally involved cleaning residue of PVC resin from the reactors in which it was produced. While it can be expected that some additional deaths will occur in the future as a result of these heavy past exposures, with the strict control measures instituted over the last two years, there is every reason to believe that vinyl chloride related disease has already been eliminated as an occupational problem.

Question: Is vinyl chloride a major air pollutant?

Answer: No. Measurements taken by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) determined that, even in the past, the average exposure of individuals living in proximity to vinyl chloride gas and PVC resin plants was many times lower than that now considered to be safe for occupational exposure. As a purely precautionary step, new EPA regulations will further significantly reduce even this minimal exposure. In addition, the EPA has concluded that the potential public

exposure from PVC fabricating plants is so minimal as to require no regulations whatever.

Question: Does vinyl chloride cause disease in the general public?

Answer: No. A government survey of all angiosarcoma deaths in the United States between 1964 and 1974 found no excess of deaths from this disease among people living within five miles of vinyl chloride gas and PVC resin plants. The report concluded: "This survey has produced no evidence that living around vinyl chloride plants is a risk factor in the occurrence of liver angiosarcoma." In addition, there is no evidence whatsoever that any person has contracted this disease from the use of finished PVC products, or from ingesting food or beverages packaged in PVC containers.

Question: Is it safe to consume food or beverages packaged in PVC?

Answer: Yes. As a result of strenuous industry efforts over the past few years, the residual vinyl chloride content has been reduced to "non-detectable" levels in packaging products made from food-grade PVC resins. Therefore, there is no reasonable possibility of vinyl chloride migration into foods, drugs, cosmetics or other products contained in such packages.

Question: Should the manufacture and use of PVC products be banned?

Answer: Vinyl chloride concentrations in the workplace, in community air, and in finished PVC products are being rigidly controlled, and there is therefore no reason to ban the manufacture or use of any

polyvinyl chloride product. From a public health standpoint, such bans are completely unnecessary and would serve only as meaningless gestures.

Question: Did the PVC industry withhold important information on the health effects of vinyl chloride from the public?

Answer: The PVC industry throughout the world has consistently acted in a responsible manner with regard to the development and dissemination of information on vinyl chloride. The industry has sponsored the majority of the medical research on vinyl chloride conducted to date, and essentially all of it conducted before 1974, when the first tentative link between vinyl chloride exposure and angiosarcoma in humans was discovered by an industry doctor and publicly announced by his company. In fact, were it not for the actions taken by the PVC industry from 1970 onward, we might still know next to nothing about the health effects of vinyl chloride.

Question: Does vinyl chloride increase the risk of still births and miscarriages among the wives of heavily exposed industry workers?

Answer: While one recent research project at a single plant in Pennsylvania reported that such a risk may exist, serious scientific questions have been raised concerning the manner in which the study was conducted. It is clear that a more thorough scientific investigation of this subject will be required before any definitive conclusions can be reached. In addition, since the research was conducted, vinyl chloride exposure levels throughout the industry have been reduced

a hundredfold or more. Even if a problem did exist, it has already been eliminated.

Question: Does vinyl chloride cause birth defects in communities with PVC facilities?

Answer: Because of a report from Ohio of excess birth defects in three widely separated communities with PVC facilities, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare conducted its own two-part study—one part in Pennsylvania and the second in Ohio. CDC concluded, on the basis of these investigations and a thorough analysis of the existing research data, that the evidence to date did "not establish any association between (birth defect) cases and vinyl chloride exposure."

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