

INTERVIEW WITH MOBIL REGIONAL MEDICAL DIRECTORS

June 12, 1974

Western Region - Dallas, Texas
Robert J. Potts, M.D. - Regional Medical Director

1. Evaluation of existing industrial hygiene-safety roles.

Dr. Potts also reports that the industrial hygienists and the field safety people in his region have a close and cooperative relationship with good communications. Whatever problems arise in carrying out our responsibilities in employee health and safety protection, he attributes to pressures from OCAW or the response of local employee relations people to these pressures.

He feels that the present organization of safety and industrial hygiene roles is adequate and, in fact, maintains that the high quality of staff advice and expertise is more critical to effective operation than any specific organization.

2. Commentaries and Recommendations

Although Dr. Potts feels that the present Mobil employee health protection program is good, he recognizes that meeting the increasing OSHA requirements for the 70's requires, among other points, an expansion of the safety man's role and an even closer cooperation with the industrial hygienists and physicians underscoring the team approach to environmental health coverage. In order to meet these goals he makes the following recommendations:

1. Environmental Monitoring

Day-to-day monitoring of the work environment should be made part of the local safety man's responsibility. The type of monitoring performed by the safety man and the frequency should be determined by the industrial hygienist based upon periodic industrial hygiene surveys. Increased responsibilities of an on-site monitoring program and the requisite technical background should upgrade the safety man's job and, wherever possible, establish full-time safety personnel with local or area responsibilities, depending upon the safety activities and requirements.

2. Training

The Mobil hygienists can probably tailor a short term course in the use of monitoring equipment to the particular needs of the Mobil safety personnel; however, this should not preclude the possible use of government or university sponsored short term training courses. All routine sampling data should be reviewed regularly by the industrial hygienist who still has overall responsibility for environmental monitoring. If this new concept for the safety man's role is adopted, the numbers and selection of safety personnel involved should be ascertained so that the industrial hygiene group can establish a time table for meeting this objective.

3. Industrial Hygienist Safety Advisor Roles

Dr. Potts emphasized that he regards the industrial hygienist as the "auditor" of environmental health conditions in the work place, i.e. the industrial hygienist cannot physically perform an on-going or continuous survey of the work environment at any given site and is able to assess the over-all environmental health conditions mainly during the periodic industrial hygiene surveys. The plant or local safety man, therefore, has to serve as the day-to-day monitor of environmental conditions, but obviously the roles cannot be mutually exclusive insofar as employee

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health matters are concerned. Obviously, the safety man has other responsibilities e.g. fire and accident prevention, employee relations functions, etc. and similarly the industrial hygienist is involved in areas outside the safety man's sphere. Dr. Potts recommendations for expanding the safety mans role is specifically in the overlap area of industrial hygiene and safety which, in his opinion, will require even closer working relationship and cooperation.

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