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Subject: USE OF DUSTFOE 77 RESPIRATORS IN MICRO-FIBERS

THE WEEK OF 6/30/75, I MET WITH 24 EMPLOYEES FROM THE MICRO-FIBERS AREA TO DISCUSS ANY PROBLEMS THEY WERE HAVING WITH THE RESPIRATORS.

THE MAIN COMPLAINTS WERE:

1. HOT & UNCOMFORTABLE - 13
2. DIFFICULT BREATHING OR SHORTNESS OF BREATH - 11
3. DIZZINESS - 5
4. SKIN IRRITATION - 3 (2 of which had skin problems prior to use)
5. INTERFERENCE WITH VISION - 5 (especially a problem for those employees wearing bifocals, as the respirator pushes the glasses upward.) (glasses also tend to "fog up" due t change in body temperature and perspiration.)

OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS:

WHEN RESPIRATORS ARE NOT BEING USED, THEY ARE LEFT HANGING AROUND THE EMPLOYEES' NECK AND SOME GLASS PARTICLES ARE ON RUBBER SEAL OF MASK AND INSIDE MASK ITSELF WHEN REAPPLIED

THE EMPLOYEES WITH THE COMPLAINTS OF DIFFICULT BREATHING OR SHORTNESS OF BREATH & DIZZINESS SEEM TO BE THOSE WHO MUST WEAR THE MASK THE LONGEST PERIODS OF TIME, SUCH AS BALERS, SPOOLERS AND FIBER CHECKERS. I GET THE IMPRESSION THAT SOME OF THESE EMPLOYEES ARE NOT USING THE RESPIRATOR AS DIRECTED AND ARE TAKING BREAKS MORE FREQUENTLY. MOST PROBABLY PART OF THE PROBLEM IS BEING CUASED BY HOT AND HUMID WEATHER CONDITIONS AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PROBLEM IN PART IS PSYCHOLOGICAL. (EMPLOYEES MUST REMEMBER TO BREATHE THROUGH THEIR MOUTH AND AT TIMES WHEN THEY ARE WORKING RAPIDLY, MAY BE EXPERIENCING SOME HYPERVENTILATION WHICH CAN CAUSE DIZZINESS AND A FEELING OF BEING

"LIGHT HEADED" THIS COULD RESULT IN THE INDIVIDUAL ACTUALLY BECOMING UNCONSCIOUS IF HE IS NOT AWARE THAT HE IS DOING IT. SO, EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE CAUTIONED NOT TO BREATHE ABNORMALLY FAST AND DEEP WHILE WEARING THE RESPIRATOR. WE MUST NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBL ALSO, THAT AT TIMES, THE WORKING AREA MIGHT HAVE A CONCENTRATION OF OXYGEN OF LESS THAN 19.5% (THIS SHOULD BE CHECKED PERIODICALLY).

THE RESPIRATOR MAY CAUSE DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING WHERE EMPLOYEES ALREADY HAVE SOME PULMONARY FUNCTION ABNORMALITY. OF THOSE 11 THAT COMPLAINED OF DIFFICULT BREATHING, HOWEVER, ONLY 1 HAD AN ABNORMAL PULMONARY FUNCTION TEST. 6 OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS HAD NORMAL PULMONARY FUNCTION TESTS AND 4 HAVE NEVER HAD ONE DONE.

SUGGESTIONS:

THOSE EMPLOYEES WEARING BEARDS ARE NOT GETTING A GOOD SEAL AROUND THE MASK THEREFORE THE RESPIRATOR IS OF LITTLE VALUE TO THEM.

PULMONARY FUNCTION TESTING DONE ON AN ANNUAL BASIS AND MADE MANDATORY SHOULD BE CONSIDERE FOR EMPLOYEES IN THIS AREA.

BETTER ACCEPTANCE OF THE USE OF THESE RESPIRATORS MIGHT BE SHOWN, IF ONE OR TWO INDIVIDUA IN MANAGEMENT WERE TO USE THESE SAME RESPIRATORS ON AN EXPERIMENTAL BASIS WHILE ENGAGED IN HEAVY WORK, TO SEE IF THEY EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE SAME COMPLAINTS.

WE MUST REMEMBER, THE MAJORITY OF THE EMPLOYEES SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THE NECESSITY, BUT FIND THE FEELING OF BEING UNCOMFORTABLE DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT. THE USE OF EAR MUFFS, CORRECTIVE LENSES, GOGGLES AND RESPIRATOR ALL AT THE SAME TIME I'M SURE IS UNDESIREABLE. THEREFORE I FEEL AN ALTERNATE METHOD OR ANOTHER STYLE OF RESPIRATOR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IF POSSIBLE.

A GOOD FILM ALSO MIGHT HELP, IF THERE IS ANY AVAILABLE, TO SHOW THEM THE POSSIBLE HAZARDS OF WORKING WITHOUT THE USE OF A RESPIRATOR. EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE WORKED HERE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS DO NOT BELEIVE THERE IS ANY DANGER IN THIS AREA.