

A. C. M. Esq.

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EA:PM/ACM

17th December, 1965.

Personal

R. A. Knott, Esq.,
I. & M. Safetywear Ltd.,
LEISTON,
Suffolk.

Dear Mr. Knott,

Mr. Magee has told me of your concern following the recent press publicity about industrial diseases, said to be connected with the usage of asbestos materials. Right away I must apologise for the delay in writing to you, but I am sure that you will understand that we have needed time to give this matter most careful consideration.

We consider that our organization has led the world in promoting medical research into asbestosis, we spend upwards of £80,000 a year in our factory alone in air cleaning and dust extraction, and we are always very concerned to protect as far as we are able the health of our employees.

There is no known health risk associated with the normal handling of processed asbestos goods (yarn, cloth, packings, jointing, asbestos cement goods). If they are machined, observance of the normal provisions of the Asbestos Regulations (S.R. and O. 1931 : 1140) will eliminate the risk to health. Although sewing machines are not covered at present by these Regulations, it is good practice to fit them with a ventilation attachment. It should be remembered that damping cloth before cutting is a good method of reducing dust emission.

Mesothelioma is a very rare form of cancer which occurs in the chest cavity. The recent reports in the "Sunday Times" concerned a study of tumours at a London hospital, and the records of 83 persons who had died of mesothelioma were

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Similar to letter to E.D. Deykin,
Wilby & Wyatt, Romford

17.12.65

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- 2 -

examined, the first case being in 1917. Thus, on the average, there were less than two cases a year examined by this hospital, which serves a vast area with a population of two to three million. About half of these mesothelioma cases had some contact with asbestos, but a quarter of them had no contact at all. There is no proof that asbestos can cause mesothelioma and it is by no means the sole cause of this disease.

The chances of anyone in contact with asbestos contracting mesothelioma are very small indeed and it cannot be over-emphasized that this is a rare condition.

The number of our employees who contract asbestosis today is very small; the risks have, by ventilation and other techniques, been minimised and the disease is well understood.

I hope that this letter will give you the information you need in order to deal with any queries which you may have from your Local Authority or from your own employees.

It is some time since we met, and it was only yesterday that Mr. Magee suggested that I should accompany him when next he comes to Leiston: I hope to do this and will look forward to the visit very much.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Edmonds



Also sent to Henry Gossling (Packings), Bolton 11/729