

JULY 23, 1979

TO: DEPARTMENTAL OSH COMMITTEE

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ASBESTOS - MEDICAL EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

The asbestos standard, 29 CFR 1910.1001(j)(2), or (3) or (4) requires employers to provide or make available medical examinations for each employee engaged in occupations exposed to airborne concentrations of asbestos fibers. Because the wording in the standard is vague, some misunderstandings have developed.

In order to establish a consistent interpretation and application of the medical examination program provision, the following guidance is provided for site use.

Sites should:

- Include in the medical examination program all employees in job categories which handle asbestos in a way that has potential for producing airborne fibers.
- Maintain a list of the employees that are in the examination program.
- Include "gray-area" job categories if monitoring shows measurable concentrations of airborne fibers by the method of measurement prescribed in the Standard.

Discussion

The objective is to be in compliance with the Standard and provide sound medical surveillance but include only the necessary employees in the medical examination program.

This guidance provided is to assist in the identification of those occupations which are included in "an occupation exposed to airborne concentrations ..." (29 CFR 1910.1001(j)(2), or (3) or (4)).

Some job categories obviously fall into "an occupation exposed." Those which probably remove old insulation, cut transit, handle asbestos additives, empty bag filters, or work in proximity to these operations are examples.

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