June 19, 1973

Mr. John Woodsmall — Detroit Sales

[illegible] — Tigard Lab

[illegible]

cc. Mr. [illegible] Burch - Portland
Mr. T. [illegible] Richards - Tigard
Mr. T. R. Godfrey - Portland

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

GP-2027

I will try to respond to your customers' concern about asbestos fiber prompted by our labeling of joint system bags. This caution label is required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). We have always used asbestos fiber in our joint system products, so, if there is a hazard, it is no different today than it has been in the past. The hazard is the inhalation of asbestos fiber. The degree of hazard would depend on the concentration of asbestos fiber in the air and duration of exposure to that air. The health problems associated with asbestos have occurred in situations where workers have been exposed to high concentrations of asbestos fiber over a period of years. Joint compounds contain relatively small percentages (2-[illegible]) of asbestos fiber.

OSHA has imposed a number of stringent standards on plants where products are manufactured containing asbestos fiber. These include limitations on the concentration of fiber in the air, procedures for handling the asbestos fiber, use of protective devices (respirators), periodic medical examinations, and labeling of all products containing asbestos fiber.

I am not aware of any OSHA regulations for the use of joint system products. However, it is recognized that there is some exposure during the mixing of dry products and the sanding of joints after the joint compounds have been applied. The level of asbestos fiber concentration at these times is not presently known. The industry is currently planning tests to determine the level of airborne asbestos during the mixing and sanding. In the meantime, it would probably be advisable for workers engaged in these operations to wear respirators. Once mixed or wetted, the asbestos fiber is not subject to becoming airborne and, therefore, is no longer hazardous. For example, ready mixed products would present no problem other than perhaps the sanding.

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One solution of the asbestos fiber problem for all concerned is to eliminate it from our products. We are engaged in a program to find ways to do this. Our first efforts were with joint system textures because we felt the spray application presented some special problems. At this time we are about 90% converted to non-asbestos texture formulas. We are now directing our attention to our dry and ready mixed joint compounds.

I hope this information will answer our customers' questions concerning the possible hazards of asbestos fiber and the actions being taken to eliminate or minimize those hazards.

C. W. L.

CWL:clz